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ABSTRACT

This book explores the embodied narrative knowledge that educators hold and express in context and call forth in situations. It is about teachers and principals living and telling and reliving and retelling stories intuitively developed around metaphors borrowed from classical literature, music, drama, mythology, and children's literature to unpack and make sense of their personal experiences in highly complex school milieus. It is also about the author's relationship with them and being in tune with the episodic sense they and the author make of their nuanced experiences. In the process, different aspects of school contexts become excavated, as different dimensions of educators' knowledge become known. Both are held open to scrutiny and made available for discussion. The narrative research in this book involves four schools in three geographically contiguous school districts. One common quality spans all four: the social narrative history of education in the United States as it manifests itself in a particular city in the mid-South. Another shared horizon that sits in the backdrop of this work is the existing school reform literature. Even though this volume primarily is a narrative exploration of teachers' knowledge, it unavoidably spills over into the topic of school reform. (Author)

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Narrative Inquiries of School Reform: Storied lives, Storied Landscapes, Storied Metaphors

A Volume in Research in Curriculum and Instruction

Cheryl J. Craig

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Storied Lives, Storied Landscapes, Storied Metaphors

A volume in
Research in Curriculum and Instruction
Editor: O.L. Davis, Jr., *The University of Texas at Austin*

Narrative Inquiries of School Reform

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FOREWORD

The importance of particularities and individual actions is brilliantly illuminated in Cheryl Craig's narratives about school reform. This emphasis, almost strangely, is all too uncommon in the every-day mindscape of contemporary advocacy, analysis, and conversation about school and curriculum reform.

Prestigious political and educational policy rhetoric insists on a starkly contrary vision. This stance (or theory) assumes that school reform can be managed through implementation through attention to various conditions, even leadership traits. It attends only to Joseph Schwab's notions of the theoretic, not at all to his sense of the practical. Centrally, it emphasizes generalization, not particularity, and conformity, not individuality.

Following managerial practices that beget cookie-cutter institutions that dot the nation's cities and highways and the rhetoric of decision-making by senior executives to be followed without question by hierarchical underlings, this contrary vision understands that school reform should feature fiats by designated, status leaders to be enacted by all teachers. Based on this assumption, this school reform notion insists, for example, that sets of "best practices" be sought through research, distributed to schools, and employed by teachers and principals without change. This advocacy explicitly denies contextual particularities and individual agency. Even so, this politically popular vision (or general theory) of school reform maintains an easy although unwarranted credibility.

This notion of school reform is not just blurred and faulty. It is bankrupt. It fails on a simple criterion: it does not work in educational practice. It offers theoretical solutions for situations that simply do not exist.

Narrative Inquiries of School Reform, pages vii–ix
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Cheryl Craig, although aware of the commonplace insensitivity of bureaucratic structures and actions in schools, sought in her research to understand the complexities of educational reform differently, not on the basis of "what should happen", but what actually occurs, "from the ground up". She became a researcher-participant in real schools. In daily interactions with adults and children who were engaged in a variety of reform initiatives in the real world of schooling, she observed carefully and thought fruitfully. The scholarly outcomes of her intensive in-school research were narratives of lived experiences, all robustly detailed and richly textured. As well, in a major illustration of the associative and interpretive uses of acquired knowledge, she employed illuminative metaphors to help her construct meanings of what and how she saw, what she experienced and learned, what she shared.

Craig's stories emphasize individual teachers' knowledge. To be sure, that emphasis attends specifically to particularities of both person (agency) and of situation (context). In her stories, Craig never suggests that readers adopt the traits of characters that are identifiable in her narratives. She never generalizes the features of particular situations to schools in general. Through her narratives, she invites readers to think beyond the text, never unproductively just to do something like someone else did. On the basis of their own reflections and pondering, only her readers can imagine the prospects of how they might work in their own totally different situations, with altogether different colleagues and leadership, and with utterly different resources. Craig's narratives are grist for intellectual imagination and wonderment, neither a script to be followed nor plans to be implemented.

Still, Craig has done much more. She lifts the veil from her substantial fieldwork as researcher in order that her readers may view her in the everydayness of her inquiries. Simply, she has made her research process every bit as accessible and understandable as are her conclusions and interpretations.

I have followed Craig's accounts of her research for a number of years. At conferences, I have listened to her present papers from her projects. Educators who attended those sessions routinely asked for more information, for additional explanations. Now, all of us have her superb book. I am particularly pleased that her book launches the series of books in curriculum and instruction to be issued by Information Age Publishing Co. I am confident that we readers will reread her book. Additionally, we surely will remember her delightful metaphors as we think about our own teaching practice. Who could forget, for example, the schoolyard dragon, the rainbow fish, and the dueling banjos? I suspect that few will. Moreover, her images of real teachers at work in real schools with real children likely will prompt many of us to think away from her stories to our own lives as we engage school reforms in different contexts. For me, I know that I will cherish both her accounts and understandings of particularity and individuality, absolutely essential as we deliberate the practical.

—O. L. Davis, Jr.
Catherine Mae Parker Centennial
Professor of Curriculum and Instruction
The University of Texas at Austin

PREFACE

This book culminates five years of extensive field-based inquiry with teachers and principals in four reforming school contexts. It arises from living alongside teachers and principals, entering into their realities, engaging them in conversations, seeing school life through their eyes, and employing the words and images they use to wrap around their experiences. It involved thinking narratively about schools as sites of high drama within which teachers and principals negotiate meaning as knowledgeable and knowing human beings. It gave primacy to everyday events taking shape on school landscapes. It meant creating spaces and devoting enormous amounts of time to observing and listening hard to what teachers and principals say and do when reform initiatives become personally lived in context—from their points of view.

This volume takes a fresh look at school reform. It asks a different set of questions, offers a different perspective, works from a different vantage point. It does not center on history, systems, or the nature of particular reform movements. Nor does it focus on assessment or accountability. Instead, it offers empirically rich interpretations of what happens when reform proposals become enacted. It shines the spotlight on educators' experiences of different aspects of reform, holds these phenomena open to inquiry, and considers their implications this way and that, but always from where educators are positioned at the ground level. It features storied ways to account for the multifold complexities of schools—each with its ongoing social narrative history, of reform efforts—each with its unique theory of change, and of people—each with his/her personally and socially constructed biography. It illuminates why initiatives do not turn out exactly

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as intended, not by assigning blame (because that is exceedingly easy to do), but by showing how extraordinarily complex forces—people, places, and things—come together and what happens as events unfurl with educators' knowledge and school contexts both shaping and being shaped by the change efforts underway.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am enormously grateful to the educators and community members at T. P. Yaeger Middle School, Hardy Academy, Eagle High School, and Destiny High School without whose willing and active participation, keen interest, and unrelenting support this work would not have been possible. I also wish to thank my colleagues who provided valuable feedback at critical points of this research journey, and my graduate students, especially research assistants Sreekanth Nadella, Angela López Pedrana, and Cazilda Campos Steele, who helped to technically prepare the manuscript. The research funds provided by the Brown Foundation, Inc., university small grants, reform movement awards received through T. P. Yaeger Middle School, Hardy Academy, and Eagle High School, and a subcontract from a major state university that supported my one-year evaluation study at Destiny High School are greatly appreciated. A special thank you is extended to Dr. O. L. Davis, Jr. for inviting me to write this book to kick off his prestigious curriculum studies series. *Curriculum Inquiry* (31:3), *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* (in press), and *Teachers College Record* (in press) additionally deserve mention for allowing articles to be published in adapted forms in this book. My husband, Bruce, my son, Jeffrey, and my mother, Imogen, have been as loving, kind, and faithful as any companions could be on an arduous journey such as this one. Lastly, I am exceedingly thankful for fond memories of my father who died in the midst of this research pilgrimage and whose presence lives on in my heart. This one is for you, Dad.

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

SETTING THE SCENE

Through personal experience we come to know and through story, we make it known. Our species thinks in metaphors and learns through stories.

—Bateson (1994, p. 11)

This book explores the embodied, narrative knowledge that educators hold and express in context and call forth in situations. It is about teachers and principals living and telling, and reliving and retelling, stories intuitively developed around metaphors borrowed from classical literature, music and drama, mythology, and children's literature to unpack and make sense of their personal experiences nested in highly complex school milieus. It is also about me being in close relationship with them and in tune with the episodic sense they and I are making of their nuanced experiences. In the process, different aspects of school contexts become excavated, as different dimensions of educators' knowledge become known. Both are then held open to scrutiny; both are made available for discussion. The stories through which the educators metaphorically live and tell particular reform events bubble to the surface. Rich contextualized narratives—unraveling a maelstrom of personal, social and institutional histories—rise to the fore.

When I first began the four inquiries that form the heart of this book, I did not set out with the explicit purpose of identifying narratives that uncover metaphors that particular educators lived at specific junctures in their reform odysseys. Rather, the metaphors naturally emerged—in teachers' and principals' free will accounts—as they storied and restoried their narratives of experience in community with their colleagues and me (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

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The particular line of inquiry began in 1997 at T. P. Yaeger Middle School, an historical campus located in one of the largest urban school districts in the United States. My research centered on teachers' narrative knowledge with a particular interest in what becomes revealed in context and within teachers' knowledge communities (Craig, 1995a). I already had negotiated long term entry into Yaeger when an association with one, then two, school reform efforts became forged and lived on site. The topic of the influence of school reform on teachers' narrative knowing slid onto my research agenda in much the same fashion as the idea of organized school reform crept into the educators' lives. The Yaeger chapters in this book (Part I, Chapters 2 and 3) chronicle individual and collective experiences of school reform that took place between 1997 and early 1999. They primarily focus on how a major reform movement—but not the one all four campuses had in common—formed a presence at Yaeger and what happened with respect to teachers' knowledge as a consequence of that presence. T. P. Yaeger Middle School: A Case of "The Monkey's Paw" (Chapter 2) captures Yaeger's storied landscape and the personal narratives of four reading teachers whereas "The Monkey's Paw": A Reflective Coda (Chapter 3) centers on what the particular metaphorical account reveals about teachers' knowledge, teachers' communities of knowing, school contexts, and school reform.

The second and third narrative inquiries contained in this volume have a different origin. They arose because a middle school and a high school campus located in an adjacent school district—Hardy Academy and Eagle High School—were involved in the same national reform movement that sat in the background at Yaeger. The local leadership of that reform agency had requested that each campus independently seek someone to help them render formative accounts of what was happening with respect to change at the individual teacher and school levels. A positive recommendation from Yaeger, coupled with what was seen as my reputation for working "with teachers" and "through situations,"[1] prompted the educators at Hardy and Eagle to invite me to help them reflectively account for their experiences of the particular reform initiative that the schools shared.

Mutual benefit sat at the core of the agreements that we made. I would collaborate with the school-based educators, help them to think about how to enact their plans, and assist them in the development of their in-school research records. These records, which took the form of reflective school portfolios, featured teachers' knowing of their contexts, students, and practices—in short, part of their scholarship (Teachers' Presentation, 2002). In turn, the school-based educators would inform my understanding of the influence of school reform on their knowledge development, communities of knowing, and school contexts—in summary, part of my scholarship. Through our research activities, their situated experiences would become known to practitioners in other schools and scholars in the academy—considerations vitally important to both them and me.

The storied material arising from Hardy and Eagle is based on experiential text gathered from 1998–2001. The Hardy and Eagle chapters follow the same sequence as the Yaeger chapters; that is, the storied school sites and narratives of human experience appear first, followed by reflective codas. Hardy's first chapter, Hardy Academy: A Case of "Dueling Banjos" (Chapter 4) focuses on one teacher's unfolding narrative knowledge of two reform initiatives introduced to that school context set amid a tapestry of collective teachers' knowing of the same phenomena. It is followed by "Dueling Banjos": A Reflective Coda (Chapter 5). Meanwhile, Eagle's initial chapter, Eagle High School: A Case of "The Dragon in School Backyards" (Chapter 7) centers on an accountability story that the principal frequently told and retold as he sorted out—and shared—his stance concerning the relationship between mandated testing and curriculum on his campus. Keeping with the pattern, "The Dragon in School Backyards": A Reflective Coda (Chapter 8) comes next. Tucked in between the Hardy Academy and Eagle High School chapters, readers will find Two Storied School Landscapes: Influences on Teachers' Knowledge (Chapter 6) which combines my overall reflections on the two middle school contexts and the significant insights they offer concerning teachers' knowledge, school milieus, and school reform.

My fourth narrative inquiry took place at Destiny High School, a campus located in a third school district. It represents a third set of circumstances. In 1999–2000, I was invited to serve as Destiny's external evaluator with respect to the organized reform agenda which threads throughout this book. In this role, I was to create a naturalistic case study (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) about how a particular reform effort unfolded on that campus. At Destiny, I awakened to the administrator's and teachers' use of narrative and elected to trace the principal's coming to know her new school context in this volume. As with the stories that encase the educators' experiences from other campuses, Destiny High School: A Case of "The Rainbow Fish" (Chapter 9) was fully negotiated with the principal as a key research participant. As before, "The Rainbow Fish": A Reflective Coda (Chapter 10) follows after the main narrative account. Two Storied School Landscapes: Influences on Principals' and Teachers' Knowledge (Chapter 11), which coalesces my reflections on the two high school cases, comes after that. My overall reflective analysis is contained in the Grand Finale (Chapters 12 and 13), which along with the Epilogue (Chapter 14), concludes the book.

Although the Destiny study was a year in length, it represents my shortest research relationship among the school contexts and my shortest research relationship in any school site and with any research participants to date. My negotiated entry into Yaeger, on the other hand, is the longest. Also, the Yaeger, Eagle, and Hardy inquiries continue into the future. The Destiny fieldwork—due to the nature of the formal evaluation project—has ended.

From the outset, four points pertinent to all of the studies need to be made clear: the historical backdrop, trends in the existing school reform literature, how I use pseudonyms, and the common theoretical framework that underpins the four narrative inquiries of school reform. I begin by presenting a thumbnail sketch of the overarching historical context.

HISTORICAL BACKDROP

The narrative research reported in this book involves four schools located in three geographically contiguous school districts. Although I admittedly came in contact with the research sites more by happenstance than design, one common quality spans all four of them: the social narrative history of education in the United States as it manifests itself in the particular mid-southern city. The aftermath of *Brown v. Board of Education*[2] is a common phenomenon—whether tacitly or explicitly stated—to all of the school narratives. For introductory purposes, readers must know that Yaeger is situated in an historically white upper class neighborhood and that Hardy is located in an historically black low socioeconomic community. Meanwhile, Eagle and Destiny are found in or near suburban neighborhoods that became populated by white citizens when desegregation policies began to take hold and "white flight" from the city center occurred. Eagle, located in close proximity to Hardy, experienced an additional transition: the shift to that of a racially, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse student body. Destiny's student population, in terms of demographics, mirrors the composition of the predominantly white school district of which it is a part. Change has occurred in that neighborhood too, but in a different form: Destiny's community recently has been annexed to the city. In many ways, the four schools concluded this phase of inquiry with more characteristics in common and increased ties to the urban center than when the research studies began.

Embedded in the history of education in the mid-southern state is the encompassing American desire to improve education for youth. This national plot line plays out in the background of the campuses as each strives to improve upon its past, especially in the aftermath of *A Nation at Risk* (NCEE, 1983). All of the schools are recognized as campuses that have led the way, particularly with respect to the reform movement common to all sites. For example, Yaeger and Hardy—propelled by various iterations of federal desegregation orders—work toward becoming more integrated and inclusive communities. Meanwhile, Eagle and Destiny embody the dilemmas of the American high school and all of its entailments: Eagle, having been allotted the traditional story of a large comprehensive high school and Destiny, having been given an experimental "small school" story to improve upon the past century's prized innovation. These preliminary historical considerations, as readers soon will discover, form a common horizon against which the educators' storied experiences take on meaning.

TRENDS IN THE EXISTING SCHOOL REFORM LITERATURE

Another shared horizon that sits in the backdrop of this work is the existing school reform literature. Even though this volume primarily is a narrative exploration of teachers' knowledge, it unavoidably spills over into the topic of school reform. Organized school reform efforts figure prominently in the contexts where the four narrative inquiries into teachers' knowledge (and, by association, principals' knowledge) take place. Because school reform plays such a key role, it is important that I acknowledge some of the strands in the established literature base and indicate how my entry point to school reform is markedly different from the important perspectives that already exist. For example, my approach is unlike the current school reform literature in that it does not focus exclusively on history like Tyack and Cuban (1995) and Ravitch (2000) or on what broadly could be lumped together as systems like Darling-Hammond (1997), Glickman (1998), and Spillane (2002). Nor have I centered my inquiries on the meanings and theories of change like Bascia and Hargreaves (2000), Fullan (2001a), and Hatch (1998) or accountability like Bracey (2000), Madaus and Clarke (2001), and Natriello and Pallas (2001). Rather, I take a narrative approach to school reform. My interest in school reform is as a narrative phenomenon, fundamentally concerned with human activity and how human beings make meaning as individuals and in community with one another. The narrative recovery of educators' reform experiences is the centerpiece of my investigations. Thus, my work is experiential rather than reductionist, formalist, hortatorical, ideological, or any other of a multitude of ways research can be described. Stated differently, my inquiries are person-centered and school-based. The personal forms the plumb line through the reconstructed accounts of school reform, and story is the glue through which the individual and collective readings of experience cohere.

USE OF PSEUDONYMS

Because the campus contexts and educators involved in this work are located in the same vicinity, pseudonyms have been assigned to all school sites and all individuals who are named.[3] Whereas some educators would prefer to use their personal names, other educators believed that their stories could not be publicly shared without the anonymity that pseudonyms would provide. In this particular research endeavor, authentically identifying one character in one setting would reveal the full cast of characters, not just in one participating school, but on all the other campuses as well. Even if human subjects' agreements would permit it, the practice was not as respectful of individuals and their stories as I would like. What was recognized as a freeing experience for some created a situation of vulnerability for others. Hence, a compromise was struck: the school-based educators—with characteristic good humor and artful flair—created their personal pseudonyms or adapted the pseudonyms I gave them. The names that they elected to use either held personal significance or had a ring similar to their real names—one that both they and I could identify.

School pseudonyms were arrived at in a similar manner. For example, T. P. Yaeger represents an historical male figure whose surname is preceded by two initials and comprising two syllables. Hardy, in noun form, speaks to the enduring strength—the hardiness—of the African American community. Eagle symbolizes large, comprehensive all-American high schools whereas Destiny's pseudonym is a nod to that campus' experimental "design" and its "desire" to improve. As can be seen, telling features indicative of each school's reality are present in the pseudonyms that have been chosen.

Like the educators, the schools, the school districts, the state, and the active reform movements are also referred to abstractly, even though the state and one reform movement remain constant throughout this book. To aid readers in their understandings, I provide the general vicinity of where the state is located and offer an overview of each reform initiative in lead chapters. One notable exception is the Coalition of Essential Schools reform movement. It is named because it played a philosophical role rather than an active presence in the Eagle and Destiny dramas. Overall, I take this discrete approach because my interest is not in reform movements per se or in the critique of how particular reforms are implemented in particular schools or specific states. Rather, my research program centers on how reform efforts influence school contexts, educators' knowing, and the manner in which knowledge becomes shared. Also, because my narrative characterizations of teachers' and principals' knowledge are unique to each situation and each school situation is narratively reconstructed in its own right, it followed that I would approach school reform movements on an individual case basis as well. I wanted the freedom to follow where the inquiries would lead with respect to how each reform association became lived in each school context and in relationship to particular educators and the stories of their lives that they brought to their specific school milieus. I wanted the latitude to show that what worked well in one context/one educator's knowing did not necessarily make sense in other contexts/other educators' knowing. I wanted the option to be able to say "it depends" should the penultimate question of what was "the cumulative effect" of reform movements on school contexts, teachers' knowledge, and communities of knowing be broached of me. But I move far ahead of myself. The theoretical background needs to be introduced.

THEORETICAL BACKDROP

Knowledge and Experience

A particular view of knowledge pervades this volume, winding its way through the pages. The term, personal practical knowledge, resonates with the idea of knowledge as a provisional way of knowing—narratively constructed and reconstructed over time. Deweyan in nature (Dewey, 1938), personal practical knowledge

> . . . captures the idea of experience in a way that [views] . . . teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons. Personal practical knowledge is in the teacher's past experience, in the teacher's present mind and body, and in future plans and actions. . . . It is . . . a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation. (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 25)

As can be seen, the view of knowledge I adopt pays close attention to the situations in which educators find themselves, the personal meanings they make of their contextual experiences, and how these meanings become negotiated with others along the continuum. It calls for, even demands, a dialectical relationship between knowledge and experience, with each informing—and being informed—by the other. It recognizes relationships, primarily human, but also with respect to places and things, as foundational to knowledge use and generation. In Geertz's deft words ". . .the drive to make sense of experience, to give it form and order, is evidentially as real and as pressing as more familiar biological needs" (Geertz, 1973, p. 140). Thus, experience in this volume is what people undergo, story is how they give it form, order, and voice, and knowledge is what is created and re-created as human beings interact with each other and their situations in ways that are as elemental and basic as the need for food, shelter, and clothing.

Story

Story is the fundamental way—"the rock bottom capacity" (Coles, 1989, p. 30)—people possess for capturing experience. It is the closest we can come to accounting raw events. Human beings, Dewey aptly explained, enter into experiences and their experiences, in turn, "do something to them" (Dewey, 1916, p. 139). Through storying, people, individually and collectively, derive meaning from their highly complex experiential situations. And through the interactive process of storying and restorying, shifts occur in what we know—with both contexts and people concurrently shaping and being shaped by experience. In this way, human beings educate through, and become educated by, story. In this manner, human beings know through—and become known by—the stories they live by. In fact,

> . . . the ultimate limit is that human beings cannot get outside of story . . . we can get outside of particular stories, or particular forms of stories, but not outside of story as such. The world in which we live is a narrative world, created by and in our stories. We like to think that there is a world out there, quite concrete and objective and reliable, only to discover that thought, too, is just another story. (Funk, 1998, x–xi)

Within the field of education, story plays integral roles from both teaching and research perspectives. The centrality of story in educational endeavors is explained well by Elbaz when she writes:

> Story is the very stuff of teaching, the landscape within which we live as teachers and researchers, and within which the work of teachers can be seen as making sense. This is not merely a claim about the aesthetic or emotional sense of fit of the notion of story with our intuitive understanding of teaching, but an epistemological claim that teachers' knowledge in its own terms is ordered by story and can best be understood that way. (Elbaz, 1991, p. 3)

Here, Elbaz, like Jackson (1995), directly links story and epistemology in the characterization of teachers' knowledge. Here, the epistemic function of story is made explicit. This point also is evident in each of the four narrative inquiries I present and a matter I directly take up at the conclusion of this book.

Story Constellations

In this volume, I use the story constellations approach, a particular version of narrative inquiry, to make sense of educators' knowledge held and expressed within their school contexts. Arising from a body of research that originated with Dewey (1938), Schwab (1983), and Jackson (1967), the approach more recently connects with the narrative methods used by Elbaz (1983), Clandinin (1986), Clandinin and Connelly (1996), and

Craig (1999) and is highly influenced by the theorizing of Schön (1983) and Lyons (1990). From Dewey came the roots of personally and socially funded knowledge, the shaping effects of context, the notion of "teachers adequately moved by their own intelligences and ideas" (Dewey, 1908, p. 16), and a profusion of other ideas. From Schwab emerged increased attention to the personal, respect for the eclectic, and the plot line of curriculum professors mindfully addressing the theory-practice divide. Meanwhile, Jackson cut the path for researchers exploring classroom life in teachers' and children's terms and Elbaz and Connelly and Clandinin mapped the terrain of teachers' personal knowledge and laid the foundation for narrative inquiry as a research method. Schön contributed groundbreaking insights into how professionals think in action and a social narrative history of how technical rationalism developed in western society whereas Lyons focused full attention on the epistemology of teachers' knowledge and the dilemmas that mark their knowing. Having provided this wide-angle overview, a fine-grained description of 'story constellations,' as well as specific conceptualizations I have borrowed from others' research programs and my own, will be presented.

'Story constellations' has the capacity to make visible the complexities that shape school landscapes, influence the nature of educators' experiences, and determine who knows and what is known both within, and about, the educational enterprise. The approach enables multifaceted studies to be framed that take into account multiple clusters of stories, and many versions of stories narrated by multiple tellers. Broad-grained shifts in school landscapes are subsequently constructed and reconstructed alongside individual and collective accounts of change. The dynamic interplay between what MacIntyre (1981) considered multiple interlocking narratives allows new knowledge of both practical and theoretical value to be created at the interstices where different constellations of stories meet. In this way, personal, collective, professional, public, curricular, historical, and institutional perspectives are productively brought together to shed light on schools, to decipher events that take place within them, and to ascertain the knowledge that educators construe from their embodied, embedded experiences.

The story constellations approach is intimately connected to Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) idea of teachers' knowledge constituting a professional knowledge landscape. The teachers' professional knowledge landscape conceptualization provides a way to situate teachers' knowledge in the context within which it is created. It offers an approach to characterizing schools without dismissing teachers' and principals' knowledge and the centrality of their relationships and interactions to the flow of events in the educational enterprise. It forms a theoretically grounded backdrop within which to feature the three-dimensional nature (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) of teacher knowledge that, following Dewey (1938), is: the temporal (past, present, and future), personal and social (interaction), and contextual (situation and place) qualities of teacher knowledge. The four narrative inquiries of school reform reconstructed in this book exude these qualities in both finely and coarsely textured ways.

Clandinin and Connelly also mapped a number of paired stories that provide entry points into the stories lived and told, and relived and retold, by teachers and principals on their professional knowledge landscapes. Among these narratives, stories of teachers—teacher stories—stories of school—school stories are critically important (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996). Teacher stories are stories told by teachers whereas stories of teachers, the partner conceptualization, are stories told about teachers. Meanwhile, stories of school are stories given to schools whereas school stories are stories told about schools.

In the story constellations approach, I add, when appropriate, two other companion sets of stories to the matrix: stories of community—community stories (Craig, 2000) and stories of reform—and reform stories (Craig, 2001). These sets of stories provide additional perspectives and offer a more panoramic view of the complex forces shaping school horizons and what becomes available to be known. I refer to stories of community as the stories given to communities whereas community stories are stories told about communities. In the same vein, stories of reform are stories given to schools to shape the story of school whereas reform stories are stories educators tell about the human experience of how reform stories become lived in school contexts. Both these pairs of stories follow the same pattern as the narratives introduced earlier and blend with the professional knowledge landscape idea. When combined, they open up inquiry spaces in person-centered, school-based studies and lead to the creation of robust story constellations that capture unique combinations of narratives lived and told at particular points in time. They reveal lives lived on school landscapes that unravel within and between the lines.

TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE COMMUNITIES

My knowledge community conceptualization, informed by Olson's (1995) idea of teachers' narrative authority, particularly centers on teacher inquiry processes and helps to illuminate how teachers negotiate knowledge on their professional knowledge landscapes. Teachers' knowledge communities (Craig, 1995b) are safe, storytelling places where educators narrate the rawness of their experiences, negotiate meaning for such experiences, and authorize their own and others' interpretations of situations as, in Mishler's (1986) words, "legitimate tellings." Teachers' knowledge communities take shape around "commonplaces of experience" (Lane, 1988, p. 188) rather than bureaucratic and hierarchical relations that declare who knows, what should be known, and what constitutes "good teaching" and "good schools" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996). These multiple places on and off school landscapes are where teachers and others (administrators, students, and researchers) take their stories of experience to obtain different readings and to validate and consolidate their narrative knowledge as individual practitioners and members of a professional community.

In knowledge communities, teachers' narrative authority is recognized and developed. Narrative authority, in Olson's words,

> ... extends the complexity of personal practical knowledge into a social, public and self-reflective realm ... Because the narrative version of knowledge construction is transactional, authority comes from experience and is integral as each person both shapes his or her own knowledge and is shaped by the knowledge of others ... the narrative authority of each educator is both enhanced and constrained by the narrative authority of others. (Olson & Craig, 2001, pp. 669–670)

Olson furthermore reminds us that conventional attempts to cultivate educators in the positivist paradigm has led to the valuing of the authority of position (Munby & Russell, 1994) and epistemic authority (Fenstermacher, 1994) at the expense of teachers' and principals' narrative authority developed through experience in community. This evolution is critically important to keep in mind when the epistemology of teacher knowledge *and* the epistemology of school reform are highlighted at the end of this book. Once again, I have jumped ahead and foreshadowed the conclusion. Right now, other terms need to be introduced in order for readers to more readily understand the four narrative inquiries of school reform that I make available for reflection and analysis.

Other Narrative Terms

In addition to the paired stories that comprise a story constellation and my knowledge community conceptualization, which, in turn, is linked to Olson's notion of teachers' narrative authority, the conduit, sacred stories, and cover stories help to unpack educators' experiences on their professional knowledge landscapes.

The Conduit

Building on Reddy's (1979) linguistic studies and Lakoff's (1987) and Johnson's (1987) individual and joint metaphorical interests (Lakoff &

Johnson, 1980, 1999), Clandinin and Connelly (1995) adopted the conduit metaphor as a key feature in their narrative reconstruction of teachers' professional knowledge landscapes, the world in which teachers live and work. Situated at the interface between theory and practice, the conduit is best imagined as a funnel pouring theoretical ideas down on practice. It is a vehicle that is used to uncover the taken-for-granted belief in the supremacy of theory over practice, a mostly hidden and often unquestioned epistemological assumption underlying the field of education, an unequal relationship that Schön (1983) also addressed in his high ground of theory/swampy lowland of practice theorizing. However, the conduit is unable to directly dispatch theoretical ideas onto teachers' professional knowledge landscapes without first subjecting those ideas to "a readying process" which, in Schwab's (1962) explanation, strips them of the contexts of inquiry in which they were produced, creating "rhetorics of conclusion"—prescriptions ripe for imposition on others (p. 24). In other words, these rhetorics of conclusion become generalized knowledge as attribute statements to be perpetuated in out-of-classroom places. They vastly differ from the narrative knowledge that teachers hold and express in their in-classroom places.

Sacred Stories

The educational conduit ensures that sacred stories (Crites, 1971) that have an unquestioned, universal quality to them continue to be lived in unexamined ways on school landscapes. These sacred stories, in Bruner's words, determine

> ... the range of canonical characters, the settings in which they operate, the actions that are permissible and comprehensible. And thereby provide, so to speak, a map of possible roles and of possible worlds in which action, thought and self-determination are permissible (or desirable). (Bruner, 1986, p. 66)

In short, they set individuals' horizons of knowing by placing limits on what counts as authorized knowledge, what can be known, and how people come to know. In sum, they work in canonical ways, having uncritically been granted the status of "the way things are."

Cover Stories

Closely associated with the terms, sacred stories and the conduit, is the idea of cover stories. Cover stories, in Crites' (1979, p. 126) view, are a way to describe how human beings—in this case, educators—come to terms with contradictions between the stories that they desire to author and the stories that others expect of them which they feel compelled to tell. This tension plays out as a form of self-deception in which individuals live and tell particular narratives in order to conform to perceived canonical versions of reality. "What makes . . . a cover story," Crites tells us, ". . .is that it functions . . . as a secondary growth constantly called into play to counter and suppress the real story" (p. 126). As Clandinin and Connelly (1995, p. 15) remind us, teachers routinely feel obliged to portray themselves as certain, expert professionals, even as "dilemmas that gnaw at their souls" wage war within (Craig, 1995c, p. 24). In other words, thin veneers of certainty mask known turmoils while blanket words coat "real stories" unable to be safely revealed in experiential terms.

Metaphors

Just as educators naturally employ a variety of stories to convey their knowing, so too, do they freely invoke metaphors to refer to and unpack their lived experiences. Metaphors are embodied (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999), embedded qualities of educators' personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). There is a primacy to metaphors in people's thinking and storying which takes human consciousness—individually and collectively—to new heights of understanding. Metaphors appear to capture multifaceted experiences in an elemental way so that complex persons, places, and things can be interpreted through the lens of something else. They defy logic, are not based on argument, and the matters held in vicarious relationship can never be reduced to one another. Consequently, reality becomes explored in a "tilted" fashion, enabling a range of interpretations to be considered (Metzger, 1992, p. 28).

Metaphors, to Scheffler's (1997, p. 87) way of thinking, do not begin as bold declarations but rather as tentative hypotheses that hold the possibility of becoming accepted narrative truths. "The challenge," Scheffler informs us, "is not to read substantiated message[s], but to find or invent significant description[s] of nature." What metaphors appear to do is help educators elucidate and elevate tacit, provisional knowledge—personally rooted in body and deeply entangled in mind—into compact public forms that can, in turn, be communicated to others as "a probe for connections that may improve understanding or spark theoretical advance" (p. 87). In short, metaphors assist in making what implicitly is known by self through experience—explicitly known, in a tentative sense, by self *and* others.

In this book, my interest is not in stock metaphors—common tropes—that have been overused and overworked. Nor am I concerned with metaphors people adopt as part of an intentional process to make sense of their experiences, although other scholars very productively use these approaches. For example, Gloria Ladson-Billings (2001) fruitfully employed the "crossing over to Canaan" metaphor to build understandings about beginning teaching in multicultural classrooms. The metaphors on which I concentrate are personally used, site-specific metaphoric utterances that educators intuitively employ in the company of their colleagues to compress their knowledge of complex reform events lived on their school landscapes and to invite feedback. I pay attention to the idiosyncratic metaphors that arise unexpectedly in the throes of educators' lived experiences and their storying of them—novel metaphors that one could only possibly identify and begin to comprehend if one were privy to specific contexts, educators' active knowledge constructions and reconstructions, and the nuanced circumstances within which the metaphors were revealed.

Having shared these introductory comments, this volume now proceeds to illuminate educators' knowledge through letting loose their firsthand accounts of *living* and *doing* organized school reform in four flesh-and-blood school contexts. We will come to see and know metaphors that bubbled to the surface on the storied landscapes of T. P. Yaeger Middle School, Hardy Academy, Eagle High School and Destiny High School. We will more richly understand "...how particular events and unique occasions, an encounter here, a development there, can be woven together with a variety of facts and a battery of interpretations to produce a sense of how things go, have been going, and are likely to go" (Geertz, 1995, p. 3).

NOTES

1. When I inquired why I was chosen, this explanation was the one that the school representatives offered.
2. *Brown v. Board of Education* was the landmark 1954 court decision that struck down the segregation of public schools in the United States.
3. This book centers on teachers' experiences of school reform initiatives. The observations expressed in this volume are offered for the purposes of reflection and analysis of how teachers' knowledge becomes shaped in context and by stories of reform. They are in no way intended to compare or be critical of individuals, reform movements, school districts, or the social narrative histories of communities.

PART I

CHAPTER 2

T. P. YAEGER MIDDLE SCHOOL

A Case of "The Monkey's Paw"

This narrative inquiry examines how an interdisciplinary curriculum reform associated with a major national reform movement in the United States took shape at T. P. Yaeger Middle School, a diverse campus with fifteen hundred students and eighty-five faculty members located in a mid-southern state. In the background sits a second organized school reform project, the one common to the four sites of inquiry.

BEGINNINGS

> … It is *The Monkey's Paw*[1] It appears as if it is a gift but it really is not a gift. The [interdisciplinary curriculum reform initiative] holds many ironies for teachers.…

Charles Wright's observation, excerpted from two years of field notes, crystallizes four teachers' ongoing reflections on their personal and collective experiences of a state-directed,[2] national reform initiative.[3] In their discussions with each other, in their inquiry group meetings associated with a second reform movement,[4] and in private conversations with me, the four teachers frequently connected their experiences to *The Monkey's Paw*

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(Jacobs, 1912), a short story found in the 8th grade student anthology. In an intriguing way, the teachers' discussions, arising from their personal experiences and the school's collective experience of reform, became inextricably linked to the classic British short story written in the mystery genre and to other more commonly used metaphors on the monkey theme.

As a researcher engaged in a longitudinal inquiry into the lived experience of school reform at T. P. Yaeger Middle School, I began to explore how *The Monkey's Paw* informed the teachers' individual and collective knowing. I wanted to access, not only the plot line of the mystery, but also the shared provisional knowledge bound up in the metaphorical expressions the teachers had personally and collectively chosen. From the beginning, I understood that the language they selected was commensurate with the personal and shared meanings that they ascribed to their reform experiences (Polkinghorne, 1988). I also recognized the power of the metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999) that people live by. I furthermore figured out that if I unpacked the plot line of the short story and carefully connected it to their experiences of the curricular initiative, I would reveal the teachers' interpretive knowledge shaped in, and out of, their reform situations. At the same time, the collective, communal experience of the school as a whole also would come more clearly into view. A narrative exploration of "the monkey's paw" metaphor would not only link the teachers' pedagogical practices with their reform experiences; it also would illuminate the influence the state-directed, national reform movement had on the story of their school, their knowledge developments, and their communities of knowing in context.

INTRODUCING THE TEACHERS

Articulating the "monkey's paw" and other related metaphors were four Yaeger teachers, all males: Daryl Watson, Bob Henderson, Charles Wright, and Howard Woodstock. The first three individuals were white; the latter one was African American. Bob, Daryl, and Charles were in the group of teachers who received sustained professional development in the interdisciplinary curriculum reform. Howard was not one of the original teachers involved in the "in-service training."

Daryl Wilson was in his 40s and had more than twenty years of teaching experience. In his career, he had taught in lower, middle, and upper socioeconomic schools at the middle and high school levels. Wilson currently teaches eighth grade reading to gifted and talented students at Yaeger.

In his 30s, Bob Henderson had taught for nine years. Prior to Yaeger, he had taught at a low socioeconomic school in the same district. At Yaeger, Henderson was a team leader who worked with students and teachers in the regular program.

The third white male was Charles Wright who was in his late 30s. Charles had fifteen years of teaching experience and had taught in lower, middle, and upper socioeconomic neighborhoods at both the elementary and middle school levels. He had taught gifted and talented 6th grade students at Yaeger prior to his embarking on a law career in a northern state. Dissatisfied with that occupation, he returned to the mid-southern state and to Yaeger to resume teaching gifted and talented students, this time as a member of a 7th grade teaching team. By the time my inquiry began, Wright had moved to his third teaching team at Yaeger where he taught reading and mathematics to at risk regular 6th grade students.

Howard Woodstock, the African American male, was in his 40s. He taught reading to gifted and talented students. Prior to teaching vocational students and working in a reading lab, he was employed in direct and indirect marketing positions for two Fortune 500 companies. Woodstock entered the public school arena when a district policy to sustain desegregation practices made it possible for minority[5] teachers to replace minority teachers who vacated school-based positions. Thus, Howard became a teacher at Yaeger, an historically white campus in the heart of an upper class neighborhood.

INTRODUCING THE RESEARCHER

The impetus for engaging in this particular investigation emerged from a dangling question left by a previous narrative inquiry conducted at Evergreen School in western Canada (Craig, 2000). After interfacing a teacher's story with the story of school where the individual worked, I puzzled over what new knowledge would be revealed if I concurrently connected several teachers' narratives with a story of school on a shifting professional knowledge landscape. This interest prompted me to frame the T.P. Yaeger Middle School study and to further develop narrative inquiry as a research method that would address the complexities of my chosen topic. The story constellation approach I created, in turn, led me to the teachers who held and expressed "the monkey's paw" metaphor in their interactions with one another and with me.

INTRODUCING THE REFORM MOVEMENTS

As foreshadowed, school reform in the United States is a national preoccupation. While all reform movements are broadly lumped together in the same category, they are not identical nor do they operate from a shared set of assumptions (Hatch, 1998). Each reform movement has its own theory of action (Argyris & Schön, 1978), its own approach to systemic problems that need to be addressed in the educational enterprise (Schön & McDonald, 1998). Here, the theories of action underpinning the two stories of reform with which T. P. Yaeger Middle School was associated will be outlined.

The state-directed, national reform movement—the first story of reform—that forms the bulk of the discussion in this chapter placed models of teaching at its core (Joyce & Weil, 1996). Based on the premise that "how teaching is conducted impacts how students learn," the initiative sought to increase the knowledge base of teachers through training sessions in which the following models of instruction were explicitly taught and practiced: advanced organizer, basic deductive, basic inductive, concept attainment, concept generalization, and group investigation. Teachers could choose which model to use in their instructional practices based on matter of emphasis, depth of desired learning, the information to be learned, and the need for variety. Not only were the teachers expected to make the purist models their teaching repertoires, the particular story of reform also dictated that they write formal lesson plans demonstrating their possible use by other teachers in the region. In the training sessions, the trainer emphatically underlined and repeatedly stressed that the models were to be used "cleanly, not creatively."

When Yaeger was selected to participate in the first reform initiative, no transfer of funds or decision-making authority occurred between the national organization and the school. Instead, the transfer took place at the state level. A division of a state agency, to whom the national organization had delegated authority, determined how the funds would be appropriated to schools, the design of the program, how training would be provided, and when it would take place. Twenty members of the T. P. Yaeger Middle School faculty received full training whereas the remaining sixty-five teachers were given an amplified overview and were to be assisted by their "trained colleagues." No formative evaluation of how the initiative resonated with the Yaeger landscape was undertaken, although the national reform movement conducted an annual survey that was very instructive to the school. The individuals who organized the funding, designed the approach, and outlined the training, also judged the school's level of success in implementing the interdisciplinary curriculum reform. At the end of the first year, a representative of the state agency which monitored the program and a hired consultant from another state determined that selected teachers would model one-time-only effective teaching using the direct instruction model. Interestingly, direct instruction was not one of the approaches that the teachers intentionally had been taught in the state directed version of the national reform effort. Nevertheless, several Yaeger teachers demonstrated how to teach using the direct instruction model. Why this unusual departure from plan occurred remains a mystery.

The second story of reform in which T. P. Yaeger Middle School participated was in a preliminary stage of development. Later an intermediary organization associated with the particular national reform movement created an office in the urban center. This comprehensive reform movement tended to view the cumulative effects of the history of schooling as a source of the educational challenge; hence, it focused its attention on the development of teacher leadership. Teacher inquiry groups were a central component of the reform strategy. These inquiry groups were formed in schools in order that teachers could reflect on their practices, consciously examine, and respond to, student work, and develop teacher portfolios that featured student learning and teacher growth. Even in this preliminary phase, inquiry group coaches were Yaeger faculty members who received particular forms of professional development from the reform movement. Yaeger's principal concurrently was trained in an administrative inquiry group. T. P. Yaeger Middle School also participated in a national research study that closely followed the development of the inquiry groups and their influence on school contexts. The Yaeger campus later received major awards from the local body of this particular reform movement. The funds were transferred from the national reform movement to the local office and directly to Yaeger, and Yaeger's teachers and administrators, in consultation with community members, authored how that story of reform would take shape on the campus.

THE STORY OF T. P. YAEGER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Built on the longest street in the mid-southern state, nearly seventy-five-year-old T. P. Yaeger Middle School has roots that closely parallel the development of one of the largest cities in the United States. Named after philosopher, poet and soldier T. P. Yaeger, the school's founding story (Craig, 2000, p. 26) was considered by numerous interviewees to be of a "silk stocking" variety. Yaeger began as a campus in which junior high school students sought educational excellence in "a cultured school that cultivated [white] members of the upper class," as one alumnus described it. In short, it remains, in an English as a Second Language teacher's words, "a very grand school ... where history speaks ... at every twist and bend of its corridors."

Planned to meet the requirements of one of the most affluent neighborhoods in the United States, the professional knowledge landscape of T. P. Yaeger Middle School shifted markedly during its lengthy history. The changes it underwent are dramatically embodied in the following contrasts. During World War II, Yaeger was the only campus in the nation to raise in excess of a million dollars in savings bonds and to purchase a Mustang airplane to support American military participation. Following that event, it was the first school in the city to install air-conditioning units. Two decades or so later—having faced desegregation policies, the public-private split, economic downturns, increased bureaucratization, and other perplexing challenges—T. P. Yaeger was described by an individual close to the scene as "a dark, run-down campus with a fence around it," a campus that looked more like a penitentiary than a school.

T. P. YAEGER MIDDLE SCHOOL STORIES

Shift in Yaeger's School Story: Desegregation

The first major interruption to Yaeger's "silk stocking" plot line came when desegregation policies were first mandated in the mid-southern state. This change allowed both African American teachers and students to attend the campus. The particular African American teachers and students who came to the school were placed there to support Yaeger's story of academic excellence. When the transition took place, two types of exits began to occur in the nearby neighborhood: "white flight" to campuses in the burgeoning suburbs and a similar retreat from public to private schooling. Later a school district desegregation policy determined that only minority teachers could replace minority teachers in the schools. Developments such as these ones radically changed the historical course on which Yaeger appeared to be set.

Shift in Yaeger's School Story: Magnet Focus

Desegregation policies nominally addressed the city's segregationist past in paper statements, but they led to the creation of an associated legacy, a separationist present which was reflected in the aforementioned flights of residents and in the new design introduced to Yaeger's story of school. Still holding on to its reputation for educational excellence, T. P. Yaeger Middle School emerged as the city's first campus with a gifted and talented magnet program. A number of historical and policy events left Yaeger with more upper socioeconomic status students as well as those tested to be "the brightest and the best" in all racial groups. Together, these students comprised Yaeger's magnet program.

Meanwhile, the Latina/Latino student population from a nearby declining neighborhood increased the number of students in the school's regular program. To manage the shock that laws, policies, and demographic change brought to Yaeger's privileged community, the school district steadily expanded the higher-end gifted and talented program as well as the overall number of students admitted to the school. Yaeger's magnet population rose from 200 students to 400 students to 725 students, thus inverting the two-third/one-third ratio of students on the campus. Instead of neighborhood students from the upper class community constituting two-thirds of the students, gifted and talented students now made up two-thirds of the school population, while the remaining one-third tended to be minority "regular program" students from the "inner city."

This second solution to the urban education crisis continued to fracture Yaeger's professional knowledge landscape, although in a somewhat different way. Unlike the first design, the divide was not as clearly along racial lines. Still, it involved the sorting of students as well as the splitting of the campus into two distinct units, each funded and staffed at different levels. This time, however, the heuristic of the program profoundly shaped the school's academic excellence plot line and formed the horizons of people's knowing.

Shift in Yaeger's School Story: Revitalization

From the mid-1970s to the present, a number of consecutive events signaled additional changes to Yaeger's story of school. First, a developer improved the school's exterior and grounds to celebrate its historical place in the community, to model a philanthropic contribution, and to maintain the value of the nearby estate homes. Second, many faculty and staff members retired through natural attrition. The incoming principal was selected by district officials to reinforce the academic excellence plot line, this time through different means. In addition to maintaining the political support of the citizens in Yaeger's upper class neighborhood who formed a large part of the tax base for the entire public school district, she also was expected to meet the needs of the minority students in the regular program who did not appear to have been seriously acknowledged in the context nor consciously addressed in the story of school to that point in time.

One of the first things the principal did was collaborate with a local university to create a model laboratory at Yaeger. The lab contributed greatly to the revised story of school the principal wanted told. It signaled three important departures. First, the program concentrated on regular students rather than gifted and talented students. This shift meant that additional resources, for the first time, were directed to at-risk, primarily minority students. Second, the lab focused on teachers who showed interest in science as opposed to those who were exemplary in the field. This process not only provided a professional development sabbatical year to more practitioners, it also began to alter Yaeger's story of school from one of expertise and specialty—the magnet focus—to one of learning and inquiry that transcended the heuristic of program. Third, instead of presenting a mandatory story of science education reform to the teachers, as would have been the case in the expert model, the laboratory instructors walked alongside the teachers as they relived and retold their science teaching stories. All in all, the targeted student and teacher populations and the collaborative sense of inquiry nurtured in the model laboratory began to introduce important modifications to Yaeger's story of school.

From 1989 onward, Yaeger's principal assembled a group of child-centered faculty and staff members at T. P. Yaeger who joined the educators already in place. Some came from the principal's previous campus; others were attracted from other districts and area schools; still others were teacher graduates of the model laboratory program. Together, they embarked on a number of grassroots school changes that included the introduction of block scheduling, daily advisory and teaching teams (1991), the establishment of a shared decision-making committee (1992), a move toward integrated technology (1993), and the introduction of a middle years program (1995). Along the way, some magnet teachers assumed regular teaching positions and some regular program teachers accepted magnet program positions. Efforts were also made to direct school funds to areas of greatest need. These changes chipped away at separations between programs, teachers, and students and began to introduce an integrationist text to the story of educational excellence lived on the campus.

Shift in Yaeger's School Story: The Current Challenge

Between 1997 and early 1998, T. P. Yaeger Middle School reached a point at which it simply could not proceed with the next revision to its plot line, the introduction of an interdisciplinary curriculum focus, without financial support for the professional development of its teachers and administrators. The $5,000 that the school was allotted by the district for the professional growth of its eighty-five faculty members and the $8,000 state award Yaeger received for mentoring other schools simply were insufficient funds to attempt to live and tell a story of reform of the proposed magnitude. Without financial assistance, little hope existed that a story of integrated curriculum reform could sustain itself long enough to become a part of the story of school at T. P. Yaeger Middle School.

This richly textured social narrative history sets the context for T. P. Yaeger Middle School's involvement in the state directed, national reform movement. The chain of events that continued to unfold led the teachers in the study to associate participation in the interdisciplinary curriculum reform initiative with *The Monkey's Paw,* the mystery story to whose plot line

I digress before turning to the teachers' narratives crafted around monkey metaphors.

INTRODUCING *"THE MONKEY'S PAW"*

The Monkey's Paw (Jacobs, 1912, p. 139) takes place against the backdrop of the White home in which a family with one child, Herbert, lived. The story opens with the father and son engaged in a game of chess. Mr. White makes a radical move, putting his king in danger. He covers his mistake by drawing attention to the wind and cursing the storm, foreshadowing events to come. Herbert, however, is undaunted by the diversion tactic. He calls out "Check," then "mate," and wins the game.

The members of the White family hear a knock at the door. An old friend of Mr. White, Sergeant Major Morris, appears. He tells stories of exotic adventures, leaving Mr. White intrigued and desirous of experiences that he has not had. The sergeant reminds his host that he should be content with the way things are. Despite his friend's warning, Mr. White persists and requests the tale about the monkey's paw, an alluring topic to which he mysteriously is drawn. The sergeant major breaks into the story about an ordinary paw with extraordinary powers. He explains that a spell had been put on it by a holy man who wanted to teach people the lesson that those who interfere with their fates do so at their own peril. The sergeant tells of how the paw had granted its previous owner and himself three wishes. Given that the paw is no longer useful to the sergeant, Mr. White asks why he continues to keep the paw in his possession. The sergeant replies:

> . . . it has caused enough mischief already. Besides, people won't buy. They think it is a fairy tale, some of them, and those who do think anything of it want to try it first and pay me afterward.

With his curiosity piqued, Mr. White then queries whether his friend would repeat his wishes if he had the opportunity to do so. Replying that he does not know, the sergeant throws the paw into the fire in an attempt to save others from the paw's mysterious influence.

Mr. White, however, steps forward and snatches the paw from the blaze. He then demands instructions as to how to gain the three wishes to which he now feels entitled. The sergeant major offers careful advice, warning his friend of the potential consequences. Mrs. White interjects. She draws important comparisons between the sergeant's rendering of the monkey's paw tale and the woman in *The Arabian Nights* who engaged in storytelling every night to save her life.

The evening conversation continues around other exaggerated stories narrated by the sergeant. Herbert jokingly observes that they need not worry about the authenticity of the monkey tale if the sergeant's other stories are indicators of his truthfulness.

After the sergeant departs for the evening, the White family's conversation turns to the most compelling topic of conversation: the monkey's paw. Mr. White questions why he would need the powers of the paw when he is satisfied with what he has. His son, however, reminds him of his desire to clear the family home of a two hundred pound debt. Mrs. White and Herbert stage a mock drama. Herbert sounds several ominous chords on the piano. Taking his cue, Mr. White rubs the talisman, wishing for the sum of two hundred pounds. Claiming that the monkey's paw twisted in his hand like a snake, he cries out in alarm. Mrs. White and Herbert downplay his response: Mrs. White, through offering condolences, Herbert, by focusing on the absurdity of it all. Herbert teases:

> I expect you'll find the cash tied in a big bag . . . and something horrible squatting on top of the wardrobe watching you as you pocket your ill-gotten gains.

The following day the White family members revisit their experiences of the previous evening. Mrs. White scoffs at how they believed the sergeant, Herbert exaggerates what possibly could happen, and Mr. White reflects on the sergeant's message. He reminds his spouse and son: "Morris said that things happen so naturally that you might, if you so wished, attribute it to coincidence."

At this point, Herbert sets off merrily on the activities of his day. Mr. and Mrs. White then engage in a conversation about whether or not the paw moved in the man's hand. Their talk predictably develops into an argument that is interrupted by a stranger, a gentleman who introduces himself as a representative of Maw and Muggins funeral home. The visitor informs Mr. and Mrs. White that Herbert has been mangled in a horrible industrial accident. The company in which he was employed does not consider itself responsible for the tragic incident, but wishes to reimburse them with two hundred pounds for the faithfulness of the lad's service.

The significance of the sum immediately strikes the couple and they retreat to their house "steeped in shadow and silence." Days pass. Even weeks. Nothing more happens.

Then Mrs. White frantically devises her own plan. She demands that Mr. White wish a second time: this time, that their dead son be raised to life. In his mind, Mr. White knows that Herbert cannot be returned to them in the manner in which he is remembered. At the same time, Mr. White does not want to add to Mrs. White's distress, so he complies with her demand.

Suddenly, a wild knocking is heard at the door. Mrs. White rushes to open it while Mr. White pleads with her not to do so. It is apparent Mrs. White is certain that the presence on the other side of the door is Herbert in his pre-accident shape. Mr. White, however, knows otherwise. He realizes he would rather have Herbert dead than have him reappear in some other form.

To put an end to this disturbing possibility, Mr. White frantically grabs the monkey's paw and makes a final wish. The story ends with Mrs. White wailing in disappointment and Mr. White mustering up the courage to comfort her.

MONKEY TELLINGS

The Monkey's Paw summary sketches the plot lines of the short story and provides an important segue into the four Yaeger teachers' reform stories formed around metaphors that illuminate the individual teacher's reform experiences and chronicle aspects of the collective school experience of the interdisciplinary curriculum reform movement. The monkey tellings lead to a continuing characterization of T. P. Yaeger Middle School's unfolding school story that features the fine-grained qualities of the educators' experiences in context.

"Monkey See, Monkey Do"

With a twinkle in his eyes, Daryl Wilson glanced at me, quickly referenced *The Monkey's Paw*, and stated: "This approach to school reform is simply a case of 'monkey see, monkey do.'"[6] I immediately recognized that the meaning Daryl has derived from the reform experience could be interpreted from multiple perspectives. On one level, it is apparent Daryl realizes that the desire to reform T. P. Yaeger Middle School is a phenomenon directly related to the availability of school reform grants and services. Taken from this point of view, T. P. Yaeger Middle School is merely joining other campuses on a "monkey see, monkey do" reform bandwagon, with both schools and teachers mimicking what reformers do. On a second level, Wilson's comment referred to the formulaic approach to interdisciplinary instruction that was implemented in his school. The underlying rationale of this method was that if certain elements were present in a teacher's lesson and in his/her pedagogical practices, then student learning would improve. On a third level, Daryl's "monkey see, monkey do" observation also applied to the curriculum writing process in which his colleagues and he, like teachers elsewhere in the state and the nation, were engaged. Like other members of the Yaeger faculty, he had been told that the lessons they prepared were for the use of other teachers. Wilson recognized that this method of lesson production ensured the continuation of "monkey see, monkey do" behaviors on the part of present and future members of his profession.

Daryl's comments resonated with those offered by another teacher on his five-member team. His colleague, however, did not describe the situation quite so delicately. That individual bristled at the mention of the reform movement and emphatically declared: "...Teachers have become slaves to forced generalizations ... and slaves to a mandated curriculum writing process...." While Wilson's colleague remained a strong advocate of interdisciplinary instructional approaches, he was highly critical of the training approach that was used at T. P. Yaeger Middle School and of the curriculum he was mandated to write. He bluntly stated: "I hate curriculum writing. It takes me away from teaching ... I am hired to be a teacher, not a person who writes curriculum for other teachers." In his own way, Daryl Wilson's colleague also resented the "monkey see, monkey do" aspects of the reform strategy.

Like his team partner, Daryl worried about the effect the curricular approach had on others and him. His observations were summed up in the following way in the participant observation notes:

> Daryl's team, in his estimation, has covered the whole range of emotions where this particular [story of reform] is concerned: ignorance, confusion, anger, with bits of relief tucked in here and there.... And then, he says, the cycle starts up again. The main problem, in Daryl's view, is few examples are given from which to work. Also, he finds the student element is missing. He wonders, "So what does equal or unequal relationships look like from a student's perspective?"

Two other colleagues on Wilson's team also provided evidence that corroborated the team experience of the particular story of reform. One individual, the team leader, left her position suddenly after more than twenty years of teaching at the school. Another teacher, new to the school and untrained in the method, chose to resign midyear. Before leaving the campus, the latter individual described how the reform movement had caused "tremendous turmoil, some of which was reckless and needless." To his way of thinking, the particular approach had taken an extremely strong teaching team "totally over the edge."

The text shared thus far indicates that the highly structured models of interdisciplinary instruction and curriculum writing formed important pieces of the background behind Daryl's "monkey see, monkey do" comment. However, an additional dimension was present. That dimension, of course, was student learning. Embedded in the particular reform approach is the belief that if students see and experience particular models of teaching, they will learn and do well, particularly on standardized testing measures. In this way, the teacher-student relationships take on an element of "monkey see, monkey do" behavior with teachers supplying the "monkey see" lessons, and the students responding with "monkey do" test results.

In addition to this point, Wilson recalled that the interdisciplinary reform idea was "sold" to the faculty as a way to take students beyond the understandings necessary to pass state-mandated tests. He offered his own spin on this relationship: "[The reform movement] promised to go beyond [instruction that prepares students for the state-mandated tests], but couldn't our school go beyond [the reform movement]?" In his own way, Daryl infused this statement with "monkey see, monkey do" logic. Having seen and experienced the state-directed version of the reform movement, he reasoned that the school should retain the goodness of the particular story of reform, discard the rest, and move on. That understanding would be a form of "doing" that Daryl's knowledge carved in the reform situation at Yaeger, and carved out of his experiences of it, would support.

"Monkey Business"

Bob Henderson, the youngest teacher in the Yaeger narrative inquiry, also related the particular reform initiative to *The Monkey's Paw.* He did so by reflectively turning on his experiences in context and considering the situations that transpired as types of "monkey business."[7]

The introduction of the interdisciplinary curricular reform initiative to his campus was especially difficult for Bob. Not only was Henderson a teacher who was personally struggling with a method, he also was a newly appointed team leader who was expected to provide curriculum leadership and support to his colleagues. Bob's situation was complicated by a further factor: on his team of six, the only other teacher who had had in-service preparation in the interdisciplinary method was an individual who also had been considered for Bob's team leadership position. Awkwardness concerning this seemingly unassociated development in the school context spilled over into team discussions of the interdisciplinary curriculum reform.

In a conversation with Daryl and me, Bob footnoted *The Monkey's Paw* and specifically discussed issues relating to the training of teachers. I captured the conversation in the participant observation notes this way:

> Bob agrees with Daryl. He indicated that only two people on his team are trained and everyone is totally confused. He observed: "It seems like [the approach] is trying to force the idea of 'relationships' on students rather than allowing the notion to arise from them."

Bob went on to explain that:

> [He] had been doing what [he] "had to do to get along" with [the interdisciplinary curriculum reform]. He noted, however, that something was "terribly wrong" because "the whole building was experiencing turmoil."

In the aforementioned passages, Bob's concerns were threefold. First, he found problematic the notion that big ideas were imposed on teachers, only a few of who were familiar with the mandated models. Second, Bob worried that the method concurrently imposed ideas on students, which was to him a form of "monkey business." Bob's third reservation had to do with the turbulence the state-interpreted, national reform movement created in his school. He spoke of the reform "pulling [Yaeger] apart at the seams." Bob equated the reform initiative's "tumultuous" nature with moral incorrectness. He explained that:

> The reform movement has made teachers feel guilty . . . It has been a long and hard road we have been traveling . . . We can improve our craft, but the problems with this reform run much deeper. . . .

In his reflective writing, Bob began to expound on specific challenges. One of his excerpts conveyed what he believed was the biggest source of concern:

> The training is the problem. We skipped over a big concept on our way to big ideas in the interdisciplinary training: teacher knowledge. The training wheels hindered teachers' creativity. Some consideration was given to students' creativity, but we did not acknowledge that teachers are creative, too.

He then connected the Yaeger experience of school reform to the conditions under which he believed the faculty worked well:

> We play best when we think we are going to be successful. With this reform, there is no feeling of success . . . just the promise of more hard work to come that will certainly displease. . . .

Bob then particularly honed in on the exclusive nature of the reform language. Although he had been "in-serviced," Bob found the codified terms associated with the interdisciplinary curriculum writing confusing and unnecessary, not only for himself, but also for the teachers who were not in the "trained monkey group." Referring to commonplace aspects of curriculum writing as "TLEs," "PLEs," "DLEs"[8] left Bob feeling inadequate in terms of his personal practical knowledge and less than capable in terms of how to relate to colleagues on his team who were understandably confused. These multiple factors caused Bob to repeatedly pause, sigh, furrow his brow, shake his head, and declare the interdisciplinary curriculum project "monkey business."

"Monkey Suits" and "Monkey Wrenches"

In connecting his experiences of school reform to *The Monkey's Paw*, Howard Woodstock particularly called forth two variations of metaphors on the monkey theme: "the monkey suit"[9] and "monkey wrenches."[10] Both metaphors related to his personal experiences of the school reform effort. The first one pertained to issues of racial identity; the latter one to matters of power.

In his teaching career, Howard has been acutely aware that he played a "monkey suit" role for students of his race and for African American educators in terms of representation on special initiatives. As an African American who came to Yaeger when the district desegregation policy was instituted, he vividly remembered replacing one of nine black male teachers and several female black teachers on the campus. He also was cognizant that only "a certain type of black teacher" was placed at Yaeger, an observation that was backed up by African American families who perceived the black teachers there to be "the best."

Howard's notion of a "particular kind of African American teacher" was reflected in his dress and mannerisms. Although Yaeger's dress code was casual, Howard Woodstock typically wore a business suit and a stiffly starched white shirt to work. Howard did so to fulfill a tacit historical expectation he has come to know as well as to form a professional role model for the current African American students with whom he works. This modeling was not only immediately evident in his immaculate appearance, but also was present in his faultless manners and in his passionate advocacy of black students, black faculty, and their interests. Howard's positive role-modeling in the school has, in turn, evolved into his playing "a monkey suit" role for all students, regardless of gender, ethnic, and racial background.

Not only did Howard look to the past, he also surveyed the present with an eye to the future when he considered the racial composition of the Yaeger faculty. He noted that, following decades of mandated desegregation, the campus had only two African American male teachers, a population significantly decreased from the original nine male instructors dictated by an earlier policy. To Howard's way of thinking, the racial distribution of faculty members at Yaeger was out of proportion to the racially balanced student population: one-third African American, one-third Hispanic and immigrant Hispanic, and one-third white and Asian. He particularly underlined the fact that T. P. Yaeger Middle School was a campus with an 86%

white faculty population in a school district that was 87% minority. Such contextual considerations mattered deeply to Howard. A reform initiative that did not take into account matters of race, culture, and representation in curriculum building, in the instruction of students, and in the full participation of faculty in professional development activities was highly problematic to him. For these reasons, Howard Woodstock connected his "monkey suit" metaphor with *The Monkey's Paw* and his experience of the interdisciplinary curriculum reform.

Howard's second widely used metaphor pertained to "the throwing of monkey wrenches" into situations. One prime example occurred when Woodstock requested to share important information at a faculty meeting regarding two grassroots initiatives that he had helped to seed on the campus. One was an institute aimed at providing community and school support to primarily underprivileged, minority students. The second endeavor concerned a teacher-initiated study group approach to professional development. Howard's desire to share information and to facilitate an opportunity for the faculty to meet and discuss topics of educational significance was pre-empted by a session associated with the state-directed, national reform movement. Howard believed that the outside agency threw "a monkey wrench" into the faculty plans that involved hours of preparation on teachers' parts. Such developments prompted Howard Woodstock to comment that:

> The [state-directed, national reform movement] is disjointed and piecemeal. [The incident showed] how 'hell bent' the reformers [were] in continuing in spite of the incredible turmoil they created.

Furthermore, Woodstock took note of how seemingly disrespectful this action was of teachers' plans and initiatives. He added that the:

> implementers [have] not paid attention to how their message has to be carried through a messenger, a teacher, to students. Otherwise, their message is lost.

In this comment, Howard implied that teachers ultimately hold the power as to whether particular reforms take root in school contexts. He suggested that the "throwing of monkey wrenches" into plans and schemes could be reciprocated. If the reform effort chose to deal with teachers and their agendas as "interchangeable," teachers could, in turn, "switch out" the reform agenda. Howard's assessment of the situation was echoed by his colleagues, one who specifically noted that Howard's being hurt "in a public sort of way" was "not lost on them."

All in all, Howard Woodstock sized up the state-directed, national reform initiative as a shaping force that, due to the lure of once-in-a-lifetime "soft money," had taken over the Yaeger context. He explained the situation this way:

> There is a problem when you work with soft money to accomplish something ... in a school. When you work to try to help a school become a certain kind of school, you fall into soft money criteria. And if you don't play ball the way some soft money players do, you could be up a creek...

He continued:

> With soft money, there are no rules per se ... it looks open-ended but then there are not necessarily future opportunities either. There is always the opportunity for false promises. In that game, you can't tell prophets from crackpots and you're back to "the monkey's paw" dilemma again.

In this way, Woodstock related his "monkey suit" and "monkey wrench" metaphors to *The Monkey's Paw* and to his personal and his school's collective experience of school reform.

"A Monkey on One's Back"

Like Daryl, Bob, and Howard, Charles Wright frequently peppered his discussions regarding the state-directed, national reform movement with talk concerning *The Monkey's Paw.* Here, his metaphor of having "a monkey on [one's] back"[11] is highlighted.

Like Howard Woodstock, Charles Wright took a historical approach to campus reform. Although Woodstock especially focused on the history of race relations, Wright concentrated on developments concerning Yaeger's story of school. Charles particularly noted shifts that had taken place over time: from concentrating on gifted and talented students, to focusing on all students, to "pushing teachers." Charles especially wondered whether or not the "reform beast" was currently pushing teachers or the school in the right direction.

Wright's inclination was to view the state-directed national reform movement as a monkey not only on his back, but also as the proverbial monkey on the backs of all Yaeger faculty members. Charles specifically disliked the notion that the reform prohibited him from "putting his own spin on things." What he found most disconcerting, however, was the initiative's imposition of teaching models on teachers. Having to write lessons according to certain prototypes was problematic because, in Charles' opinion, the experienced faculty at Yaeger worked "from hybrid models ... and the whole school is a collection of creative genius." Equally perplexing to Charles was the idea of teachers having to teach a "direct instruction" lesson on demand for the visiting representatives of the reform initiative, a model that clearly was not part of the "reform package." Charles and I unpacked the root of the problem in the following exchange:

Cheryl: What do you think caused the problem with the [first story of reform—the state directed, national one]?
Charles: It has been growing. I can point to markers along the road ... and say had we done it differently things would be better now.
Cheryl: Yes ...
Charles: The first was the idea to expand beyond the original proposal.
Cheryl: Past the original teams?
Charles: Past the three teams of four people each.
Cheryl: Mm-hmm ...
Charles: Four people per grade level ... that was the way it was originally presented to us—twelve volunteers—
Cheryl: Right.
Charles: I understand the road to hell is paved with good intentions.

To Charles, the reform movement rode on the backs of teachers from the moment it moved from a volunteer team of twelve to one of twenty to one that mandated the participation of the eighty-five T. P. Yaeger faculty members. This concern grew, giving rise to repeatedly discussed, twisty problems, as these two longer excerpts from inquiry group conversations illustrated.

Conversation I

Charles: A sacred promise made last year has been broken. We were told we would never have to train other teachers. But now, that is what is happening ...
A Colleague: We are being forced to teach curriculum differently. We have neither supplies nor storage. It is impossible to team with colleagues who have not been trained ...
Charles: We have to share our experiences [of the reform movement]. Working in a vacuum is frustrating ...
Daryl: It is like being in the woods without a flashlight ... There are a zillion things going on—I don't have time to sit down and focus on curriculum writing ...
Bob: We have done very little because so many other things are calling us, like the parents whose child has received a

B for the first time in his/her life. Why must we write imposed curriculum . . .

Coach: We have put [the state-directed, national reform initiative] under the microscope. Let's not shelve it . . .

Charles: It is *The Monkey's Paw.* It appears as if it is a gift but it really is not a gift. The [interdisciplinary, curriculum reform] holds many ironies for teachers . . . [The curriculum reform] simply cannot be force-fed . . . placed like a monkey on the backs of teachers.

Conversation II

Charles: The lesson models are moving in the opposite direction to teacher empowerment. They are so prescribed that they take away from empowerment.

Colleague: I am wondering about feedback from the reform representatives. My students are asking what the people in suits had to say about their learning. They are really wondering—as I am—about the world of grownups—

Charles: This year is such a mixed bag—Imagine coming in in the middle of two class periods and making judgments . . . Back to the lesson models, we need to extract what works and discard the rest . . . There is a big difference between empowerment and delegation.

Daryl: What is going on is hard to swallow . . . Too many cooks in the kitchen hinder, not help education . . .

Charles: And the cooks are throwing different things in the pot. After a while, we look back and wonder what is floating around.

Bob: And the pot is getting bigger, but not necessarily better. . .

Charles: There is this mirroring thing that is not collaborative. It means doing what the expert does. It does not give individuals credit for their own smarts . . .

Daryl: It is scare tactics.

Charles: I resent having to play this game. People cannot be worked with like they, and their knowledge and experiences—are interchangeable parts.

In the featured excerpts, Charles Wright related the introduction of the state-directed, national reform movement at Yaeger to a longstanding monkey riding on the backs of teachers. In articulating his personal experience of the interdisciplinary curriculum reform, the school's collective reform experience and its resemblance to and reflection of *The Monkey's Paw* short story, comes sharply into view.

THE MONKEY'S RETELLING

I now return to a telling of the T. P. Yaeger Middle School story and embellish its unfolding plot line with insights that *The Monkey's Paw* and the teacher-generated monkey metaphors offer.

Shift in Yaeger's School Story: A Post-"Models of Teaching" Reform Telling

The story of interdisciplinary curriculum reform took place against the backdrop of T. P. Yaeger Middle School. The scene opened with the principal and the faculty members engaged in a game of homegrown school change in which a number of strategic moves introduced systemic changes to the school. Such developments as the introduction of block scheduling, daily advisory and teaching teams (1991), the establishment of a shared decision making committee (1993), a move toward integrated technology (1993), and the introduction of the middle years program (1995), shaped the context of teaching by altering teachers' out-of-classroom places on the professional knowledge landscape. Only the introduction of interdisciplinary curriculum reform potentially could influence teachers' in-classroom places in which face-to-face pedagogical interactions occur with students. Both the principal and the faculty knew that the approach was a radical move and that Yaeger did not have the financial resources to support a change of such magnitude. Its landscape was impoverished due to its location in a large, centralized school district in which other campuses understandably were more needy.

Then a knock came to the school door from organized school reformers. Tales of other schools were told, particularly those in Tony Alvarado's District 2 in New York City, whose campuses were similar in racial, historical, and socioeconomic composition to Yaeger (Elmore & Burney, 1998). The principal found the New York story compelling despite concurrent tales to "leave well enough alone." Urged on by others in a wide variety of places who were desirous of keeping Yaeger "the best" but unwilling to advocate for, or provide, the necessary resources, the principal began to pursue things the school did not consistently have. The principal and the faculty gradually became convinced of the merits of organized reform. Hearing that other campuses in the mid-southern state, in addition to those in the New York district, had successfully engaged in curriculum change, the principal seized the opportunity to participate in the organized reform movement when an invitation was extended. When the faculty involvement changed three times, from twelve to twenty teachers to the entire faculty, everyone went along with the changes. The principal knew that including all the teachers, in a non-invitational way, was risky business. At the same time, she recognized that the plan was absolutely necessary because the effort was funded by once-in-a-lifetime "soft money" and time was of the essence.

A number of small things began to happen—almost naturally—at T. P. Yaeger Middle School. Friction noticeably became apparent between and among teachers who previously had worked in highly collaborative manners. Tensions also were evident between two or more trained teachers on teams and between trained teachers on teams and untrained teachers on teams. Then some new and veteran teachers either quit teaching or transferred to other schools. Soon, the faculty was split with none of the teachers fully supporting the particular story of reform, although all the teachers supported an interdisciplinary approach to teaching curriculum. The principal also became disenchanted with the way the movement judged her leadership, the school, the faculty, and the knowledge she and the teachers held. In short, the entire professional knowledge landscape of T. P. Yaeger Middle School was in upheaval. Not only were the teachers' identities and the principal's identity challenged, so, too, was the school's academic excellence identity in question. When the faculty and administration awakened to the grave situation, they realized that neither the school as a collective nor they as individuals could reverse the influence of the first story of reform and return to a pre-organized interdisciplinary reform state. They had to carry on in spite of the unexpected losses they had sustained.

NOTES

1. "*The Monkey's Paw*" (Jacobs, 1912) is a classic British short story that chronicles what happens when people are not satisfied with what they have.
2. The term, "state," as used in this chapter, refers to one of the fifty states in the United States. It does not mean "central" or "national."
3. The first national reform movement named in this chapter was made possible by philanthropic funds awarded through a foundation. In this case, the funds were distributed to a division of a state agency that, in turn, selected schools to participate. The philanthropic organization had honorable goals and was widely respected. Its track record was long and distinguished.
4. A philanthropist with a firm commitment to public education sponsored a second reform initiative in which teacher inquiry groups were key features. In comparison to the first philanthropic endeavor, the second movement was new to the school reform scene. In this instance, substantial sums were

distributed to intermediary organizations that selected schools and networks of schools to participate in the reform program.

5. The common use of the term, minority, is highly problematic. Among other issues, minority citizens comprise the majority population in the particular urban center.
6. "Monkey see, monkey do" is a metaphor that loosely means to copy or mimic what one has been shown.
7. The metaphor, "monkey business," refers to a prank or a mischievous act of some sort.
8. The point here is that the indiscriminate use of acronyms—regardless of their letter combinations—held no meaning for the teachers.
9. Males in dress clothing are often described as wearing "monkey suits." Tuxedoes are particularly considered "monkey suits." For African American males, the stark contrast between a dark suit, a white shirt, and dark skin male may call forth other meanings. A recently published book, *The Monkey Suit and Other Short Fiction on African Americans and Justice* by black author, David Dante Trouth (1998), suggests that a culturally specific interpretation of the "monkey suit" metaphor may also exist.
10. The "monkey wrench" metaphor refers to an unanticipated "turn of events" that upsets the manner in which the situation is expected to unfold.
11. "A Monkey on One's Back" is a burden that has been placed on a person by someone else. The burden constrains the individual's ability to the things he or she wants to do.

CHAPTER 3

"THE MONKEY'S PAW"

A Reflective Coda

In Chapter 2, "the monkey's paw" metaphor which revealed four reading teachers' experiences lived and told during a particular juncture of time in T. P. Yaeger Middle School's reform history was presented. Chapter 3 now captures my reflective turn (Schön, 1991) on the teachers' experience of the Yaeger-based change initiatives.

THE INFLUENCE ON THE STORY OF SCHOOL

A story of interdisciplinary curriculum reform was introduced in the previous chapter to the story of T. P. Yaeger Middle School in an attempt to alter how its academic excellence plot line was lived and told. The state-directed, national reform movement introduced the adaptation in a professional development setting, an out-of-classroom place, in an effort to shape what happens in teacher-student relationships in in-classroom places in the school. The story of reform, like the story of school, was dependent on teachers like Daryl, Bob, Howard, and Charles who were expected to carry knowledge they were given in one place and to express it, in mime form, in another place on the landscape.

The teachers' reform stories indicate that the approach was flawed in a first order way because it denied the teachers their ways of narrative knowing and their identities arising from their personal knowledge, sensibili-

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ties, and desires. The approach was faulty in a second order way because the lived story of school at Yaeger was already further along in an integrationist plot line than the story of reform introduced to it. Although the substance of the story of reform was highly desirable, the way it was presented was not reflective of the choices inherent in the interdisciplinary curriculum reform approach. Also, it did not resonate with the story of teachers that had already begun to shape Yaeger's story of school under the very capable leadership of the current principal. In their conversations, the teachers took exception to off-campus cooks throwing ingredients into their classroom and school pots without someone—themselves, in particular—tending to the seasoning. The teachers favored a more evenhanded approach that would have enabled them to discern the contributions of "crackpots" from the wisdom of "sages" by filtering their professional development offerings through their personal practical knowledge and expressing their meaning-making via their narrative authority in their knowledge communities.

THE INFLUENCE ON TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE

The T. P. Yaeger Middle School inquiry additionally illustrates how the particular story of reform did not take into account that teachers like Bob, David, Howard, and Charles, created, in addition to used, knowledge. The singular focus on predefined uses of models of teaching, along with the propensity to standardize reform, ironically worked against the intent of the state interpreted, national story of reform rather than facilitated the desired changes. Considering teachers solely as "doers"—and not as "knowers"—is slippery business as this narrative inquiry amply demonstrates. When teachers' voices and their knowledge are not mindfully taken into consideration, teachers may enter into conversations—not with the substance of reform initiatives as anticipated, but about the value of the story of reform to their ways of knowing—an unanticipated development. Howard's narrative rightly pointed out that the state-directed, national reform movement fundamentally needed teachers to carry "the message through" to students. Without committed and willing teachers, the interdisciplinary story of reform, as determined by the reform movement, could go nowhere. Yet, with committed and willing teachers, the message would at best be sifted through teachers' personal practical knowledge and expressed through their narrative authority in their knowledge communities. Such an approach necessarily depended on teachers as creators of knowledge. To expect that models of teaching could be used "cleanly, not creatively" is contrary to how teachers develop and express their knowledge in context. The notion conflicts with what is currently known about productive, generative professional development (Olson & Craig, 2001).

In his account, Charles particularly voiced how the state-interpreted, national reform movement did not resonate with the current version of the school story he had come to know. He specifically spoke of the role of the expert and how that "outside" individual delegated tasks as opposed to empowering teachers with opportunities to make mindful decisions. Charles, of course, had lived through the introduction of the model laboratory, which shifted Yaeger's story of school from a focus on expertise to an emphasis on learning and inquiry. Readers also will recall that he changed from teaching gifted and talented students to teaching at risk students. Not surprisingly, Charles railed at this particular development that, for him, represented change without progress. He recognized consequences for his identity were wrapped up in this potential shift. Charles' response implied that different versions of stories of school are built around different stories of teachers. Charles tacitly knew the reform stories that he was living and telling did not fit with the plot lines that the state interpreted, national reform movement had given his colleagues and him.

Whereas Charles expressed concern about the lack of fit between and among stories of school and stories of teachers, Bob honed in on the reform language that also had implications for teachers' identities. To Bob, the introduction of a language of practice which replaced teachers' commonplace terms stratified teachers based on their linguistic recall of the story of reform. The new language of practice overtly signaled whether or not the teachers knew what they were expected to know and bore consequences for their identities, shaped their relationships with their peers, and determined how their practices were interpreted by representatives of the state-directed reform agency.

Connected to Bob's aforementioned concern was the notion of teachers training other teachers, a point the four educators raised in different ways. Such an approach appeared equally as problematic to the development of teacher knowledge as is the expert model. The elevation of some teachers' knowledge—at the expense of other teachers' knowledge—was described as "a sacred promise [that was] broken" by Charles Wright. The arrangement was forced on unwilling teachers: all who wanted to focus their efforts on teaching children, a majority who disliked being treated as the students/teachers of other teachers. The "trained" teachers resisted the expectations placed on them by the reform initiative even as the "untrained" teachers resented being placed in a compromised position on the school landscape. Taken together, the situation meant that all teachers at T. P. Yaeger Middle School simultaneously experienced dissonance between the stories that they had been living and the stories that they were expected to live. The altered relationships on Yaeger's professional knowledge landscape created the tumultuous quality of which the teachers repeatedly spoke. The nationally funded, state-directed approach to school reform changed teachers' positions and relationships in ways considered morally reprehensible by teachers like Daryl and Bob. These teachers believed members of their faculty, story of reform individually and collectively, needed to determine what would be disregarded in the story of reform and what was useful and valuable if kept. This approach would ensure the maintenance of a healthy dialectic between the shaping force of the state-directed reform and the educators being shaped at T. P. Yaeger Middle School.

A further teacher knowledge consideration emerged in Chapter 2 that also bears special mention. The exploration of Howard's "monkey suit" and "monkey wrench" metaphors particularly begins to illuminate the complex relationship between teacher knowledge, race, and identity. Just as race and culture influence student achievement, so, too, do racial and cultural considerations deeply shape teachers' identities, their readings of contextual situations, and their expressions of knowledge on the professional knowledge landscapes of their schools. It is deeply apparent in this narrative inquiry that reform initiatives are more likely to blend with teachers' knowledge if they are attentive to matters of race, cultural relevance (Ladson Billings, 1994), and contextual appropriateness.

This review of the state-directed, national reform movement's influence on teachers' knowledge leads to a discussion of its influence on teachers' knowledge communities and then to reflective comments concerning teachers' overall positioning on the professional knowledge landscape with respect to the idea of school reform.

THE INFLUENCE ON TEACHERS' COMMUNITIES OF KNOWING

Where teachers' knowledge communities are concerned, the previous chapter amply revealed how teachers adopted new texts. Daryl, Bob, Charles, and Howard originally came together around their reading interests, which their selection of *The Monkey's Paw* short story and discussion of the other related metaphors exemplify. In this narrative inquiry, the teachers set a particular literary text widely known to them alongside their experiential text of the interdisciplinary curriculum reform for the purposes of dialogue, reflection and analysis. A "monkey's paw" view becomes available to readers. It shows how meanings the teachers originally negotiated in in-classroom places with their students expanded and became intricately linked with meanings that they created in out-of-classroom places with other teachers, materials, organizations, and me. A first-hand look at knowledge communities serving as safe places where the past-present-future continuum of teacher knowledge is honored and preserved comes into view. We see teachers' knowledge communities offering stability at a time when unrest was experienced within their respective teaching teams and on the overall school landscape. Repeatedly, the teachers turned to members of their knowledge communities to decipher personal and collective reform experiences and to plan appropriate future actions.

In Chapter 2, Howard Woodstock remained in the conversation and the knowledge community even though he was not one of the twelve or twenty fully participating teachers as were his colleagues. Howard's long-term interest in developments in his school context, along with his enduring support of minority students and balanced faculty representation, prompted him to remain active in the knowledge community. His prior understanding of the monkey metaphors offered him both a fluency and an interpretive lens with which to make sense of the reform experience. At the same time, Howard's colleagues welcomed a reading of how the initiative was experienced by a teacher whose position on the school landscape was quite unlike their own.

In this regard, I, as a researcher, was somewhat like Howard in that I was not a participating teacher. Neither was I conversant in the monkey metaphor language. What I did to gain entry into the knowledge community was to acknowledge and express a keen interest in the metaphors the teachers lived the reform movement by. At the teachers' urging, I then read the short story that Daryl enthusiastically gave me. My familiarity with *The Monkey's Paw* then helped me to interpret, in a more informed way, the field texts of the teachers' experiences around which they had wrapped their multiple expressions of the monkey theme. This development shows that teachers' knowledge communities are not closed communities—that they grow and expand once commonplaces of experience are established and trust is built. Their inclusion of me, as an outsider, in their individual and group meaning making indicates that members of the state-directed reform initiative could also access the provisional sense that the teachers were making if they were attentive to the educators' perspectives, metaphorical expressions, and narratives.

In the passages excerpted from a number of knowledge community conversations involving the teachers individually, collectively, and with me, the teachers' personal and collective understandings of their own, each other's, and their school's experience of school reform shone through. Their ability to dig to the root of their own, and others' concerns is obvious. Also, evident is their desire to "improve their craft." Throughout the entirety of Chapter 2, the teachers did not present barriers to change in their knowledge community conversations. Rather, they identified the deep matters that prohibit them from changing in ways that would be fruitful for them and beneficial to their students. In their conversations, the topics discussed extend beyond their knowledge of themselves and their experiences to their knowledge of their students and their experiences. The teachers were perturbed equally by big ideas foisted on generic students and by teachers approached "interchangeably." In short, the teachers were exceedingly mindful of the human complexities that marked the T. P. Yaeger Middle School landscape and sincerely desirous of acting in ways that would be responsive to the particularities of their situations and that would engage their students and fellow teachers in personalized ways.

THE INFLUENCE ON TEACHERS' POSITIONS ON THE LANDSCAPE WITH RESPECT TO SCHOOL REFORM

The four Yaeger teachers, Daryl, Bob, Charles, and Howard, became involved with the state-directed, national reform approach to interdisciplinary curriculum change in a very positive frame of mind. Three of them were among the original twelve volunteers; the latter individual lent his full support from the sidelines. All were and remain strong proponents of interdisciplinary curriculum; none were fundamentally opposed to the reform initiative from the outset. The question that begs to be revisited here is this one: what happened at the interface between the first story of reform and the particular school context that prompted the teachers privately and publicly to associate the initiative with *The Monkey's Paw*?

Seemingly, a number of events occurred simultaneously on the professional knowledge landscape of T. P. Yaeger Middle School that altered the teachers' perceptions and prompted them to respond in ways that brought their personal and collective knowledge to the fore. One was the late substitution of mandate for the early invitation to reform. Another was the ongoing lack of sensitivity and responsiveness both to the knowledge teachers brought to professional development situations and to the knowledge they took away from such experiences. Third, the dogmatic presentation of teaching models and the intent to standardize served to impinge upon rather than enhance the teachers' knowledge of how their students learn and how they learn by approaching both students and teachers in less-than-human ways. These factors began individually and collectively to diminish teachers' identities. These developments caused the teachers repeatedly to remark, ironically within the context of a second story of reform embodying a different theory of action, that they needed to shape the shaping force; that is, they needed to reform the interdisciplinary curriculum reform effort, the first story of reform. This development would create a healthy rather than an unhealthy tension at T. P. Yaeger Middle School. It would permit personal and collective growth that was not accompanied by a deep sense of loss. It would positively address *The Monkey's Paw* ironies of which the Yaeger educators lived and retold when a top-down reform initiative was introduced to the story of school enacted on their professional knowledge landscape.

CHAPTER 4

HARDY ACADEMY

A Case of "Dueling Banjos"

The previous two chapters offer a sense of one top-down reform movement emerging in the foreground at T. P. Yaeger Middle School. The Hardy Academy narrative inquiry, which comes next, features two reform initiatives, one top-down, one not—both positioned in the forefront—both attempting to influence teachers' knowledge and practices and to alter Hardy's story of school.

OVERVIEW

While a great deal of research is available concerning reform initiatives, their goals, their theories of change, and their failures and achievements, little is understood about what happens as they form a presence in different school milieus and attempt to shape school contexts and teachers' knowledge. Even less is known about two or more reform efforts that appear on a single professional knowledge landscape during approximately the same time frame.[1] This narrative inquiry builds on the Yaeger account presented in Chapters 2 and 3 and continues to take up this critically important question but from the vantage point of a different school site and a slightly adapted research approach. It reflects a longitudinal study conducted at Hardy Academy, a grades 6–8 magnet school for the mathematics, science, and fine arts a campus with fewer than 500 students, that is located in an historically underserved African American community.

Narrative Inquiries of School Reform, pages 49–75
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An abbreviated excerpt from a teacher research group meeting captures the theme of the Hardy Academy inquiry and introduces the "dueling banjos" metaphor that subtly will be unpacked as an expanding and contracting constellation of stories—which typically build up to the metaphorical utterance—are brought to light.

Anna: We have competing grants here ...
Marla: Actually, dueling grants ...
Kaye: They *are* dueling grants ...
Marla: Hums *Dueling Banjos*,[2] the theme song from the movie, *Deliverance*,[3] inventing lyrics to suit the tune and the occasion.

As a researcher, I was fascinated by the "dueling banjos" metaphor that the Hardy teachers seized to string together their jagged experiences of the change efforts underway in their school. I was curious about the temporal events that had unfolded which gave way to the metaphorical association. I wondered about the metaphor's narrative resonance (Conle, 1996) with the knowledge and experience of others in the school context and in the community and its practical value to individuals and the school as a whole. I felt invited into the lived world of meaning it could open up.

These questions, wonders, and ponders propelled me to follow the metaphor's narrative thread—backward and forward, inward and outward—to gain an up close sense of what was going on at Hardy Academy. What specifically would the *Dueling Banjos* tune, coupled with its *Deliverance* movie association, reveal about the relationship between the two change initiatives and the teachers' personal and collective knowing of themselves, their school context, and the neighborhood within which the campus was situated?

This account begins with the participatory work that brought me to Hardy. The story of the Hardy community is then presented to illustrate powerful connections between and among stories of school—school stories and stories of community—community stories, which I have collapsed here for the sake of brevity. Following that, the two stories of reform subsequently introduced to the school landscape—which prompted the educators to make their experiences public in a metaphoric way—are shared. These interwoven stories, attached to Hardy's narrative as a magnet school, greatly influenced the context and informed the horizons of the educators' knowing. They determined not only who knows and what is known (Dewey & Bentley, 1949), but also how the situated, embodied (Johnson, 1989) knowledge of the particular stories of reform became known by the Hardy educators.

COMING TO KNOW HARDY ACADEMY

When I was invited to work alongside the faculty and staff of Hardy Academy in their change effort related to a major national reform movement, I was, as shared earlier, a relative newcomer to the American educational landscape. Although I was in the midst of the Yaeger study chronicled earlier, T. P. Yaeger Middle School's privileged "silk stocking" origins made that context strikingly different from that of Hardy.

For me, Hardy Academy was untraveled terrain for a number of reasons. First, as a Euro-Canadian, I understood from print and newscast accounts the relationships between and among American urbanization, segregation-desegregation policies, and the plight of the less fortunate who mostly represent minority[1] populations, but I had no reservoire of experience on which to draw in the situations I would encounter. Second, to this point in my career, I had conducted research studies in schools in middle and upper-middle socioeconomic neighborhoods, although I had previously taught on a low-income campus populated by immigrant middle-European students in Canada. Third, I had no prior involvement with organized national reform movements other than the preliminary association already noted. Fourth, I had not worked in a school that was subject to so much legal intervention and regulation. Taken together, these many considerations made Hardy markedly different from T. P. Yaeger Middle School, the American school landscape fresh in my experience, and the many Canadian school contexts I had stored in my memory both as a student and as an educator.

My early relationship with Hardy Academy quickly reminded me that, although human beings are all shaped by stories, the stories that they are shaped by are not the same ones. My Hardy Academy experience spurred me to recall this simple, though enormously profound, idea. I also humbly remembered that while my role was to work with the educators whose lives took shape at Hardy, the individuals, together with members of the community, concurrently educated me in rich and powerful ways, not officially recognized in documents—but deeply lived—in the reciprocity of relationship.

THE STORY OF HARDY COMMUNITY—HARDY COMMUNITY STORIES

The Hardy community was developed during World War I when African American citizens purchased acre plots of land, built homes, and assumed agrarian lifestyles. This development meant that livestock such as chickens and horses were raised and that produce was grown for personal consumption. Marketed as "a bit of genteel country within quick and easy access of the city" (Mack, 2002, p. 20A), the neighborhood increased in size to the point where a local 1950s newspaper called it "the largest all-Negro community in the United States" (Hardy Academy, 1998–1999a).

The Hardy community currently covers an expanse of 7,600 acres, and crosses three school districts, reportedly because "no one [district] wanted" all the African American students when desegregation occurred. It reflects striking contrasts between old and new, rural and urban, and poverty and wealth. In the vicinity of Hardy Academy (formerly Hardy Junior High School), spacious homes sit alongside government subsidized apartments and seemingly endless cottages, the majority of them showing serious signs of aging. Still other properties look abandoned whereas others appear to be inhabited by temporary dwellers. In short, Hardy is a poverty-stricken neighborhood that shows early signs of transition. It remains, in a current black educator's words, "about as far removed from a cookie cutter community as one could possibly imagine."

Two major paved thoroughfares pass through Hardy near the campus; a third is under construction near the school's front entrance. The past project, started "eons ago," was completed as late as 1998. The new project began during the writing of this book. All other roads near Hardy Academy are like rambling, country lanes[5] and bear names reflecting the history and folklore of the people. Roads such as Salvation Corner, Pecan Street, and Banjo Lane abound. And people, particularly elderly gentlemen, sit on porches, drinking coffee, watching the world roll by.

Small churches and businesses are sprinkled abundantly throughout the Hardy neighborhood, seemingly appearing on every block. One rough-and-tumbledown house of worship has an equally precarious Upper Room perched on top of it. The numerous businesses and places of worship continue to exist because citizens walk to institutions and shops as they go about their daily routines. Thrift is the order of the day where stores are concerned whereas spiritual revival is a common theme shared by the churches. Hence, signs like "Bargain Basement Prices" appear side-by-side with "A New Day Coming. . . ."

To individuals born and raised in the community, Hardy is a place in which African American citizens "dug roots" and "formed wings." The current state representative referred to the Hardy neighborhood in the following manner: "I was reared here and am very proud. No community is any greater. There are outstanding people, personalities, resources, and leaders here. I am blessed to be a part of it." The adult who turned the soil to open Hardy Junior High School in 1963 concurred with the state representative's opinion. She also discussed the "dignity and sense of pride in community" and "the tight connection between family and community." One street was especially remembered because it was closed for parades, homecomings, and other festivities. For her, Hardy was a community "with a lot going on for children."

Yet Hardy, like all other communities, dramatically changed in the years to come, particularly during the sod-turner's lifetime. As one newspaper report indicated, "decades of trauma took their toll" (Rodriguez, 2001, p. 18A) on the neighborhood. When racial integration happened and some members moved away, the community regrettably declined to the point in which it openly was storied as a neighborhood "plagued with poverty, unemployment, and crime." The street once distinguished for its parades and celebrations became known for its drug-dealing activities. The community once recognized as "a source of power" found its life "siphoned from it" (p. 18A). And even worse conditions set in for those who remained. As one individual put it, the Hardy neighborhood became "increasingly distressed" as desegregation policies became lived.

Hardy's immediate past principal, an African American male, concurred with assessments such as this one. To him, a common public perception of the Hardy community was of "a rough, drug-infested, crime-riddled neighborhood." In the same breath, however, he underlined the community's historical relationship with education. He explained:

> Prior to forced desegregation, the Hardy community had a lot to do with education. It had a rich history, not in terms of dollars, but in terms of the value the community placed on education. In the Hardy community, schools were highly prized. Everyone knew about the academic, social, and athletic contributions of schools.

This brief combined sketch of stories of community—community stories set the context for what follows: the Hardy story of school—Hardy school stories. The narrative threads that ground the school in its community increasingly become evident.

HARDY'S STORY OF SCHOOL—HARDY'S SCHOOL STORIES

The history of Hardy's story of school remarkably predated the construction of the current school building. A 66-year-old black female city leader of prominence noted that during the segregation years, the Hardy community initially had one school that was so overcrowded that students attended in shifts: first in two shifts, then in three shifts. Located on a "desert like" plot of land, the campus had no running water. A makeshift spigot was fixed to a hose attached to an adjacent property that served as the water fountain from which students and teachers drank. Due to persistent overcrowding, one black father—physically and figuratively—"crossed over" the interstate highway to a white neighborhood of his own accord. His voluntary crossover resulted in the first court intervention and white citizens recognizing the educational needs of the African American community. As a result, the school district constructed additional schools in the Hardy neighborhood with Hardy Junior High School being one such building. The new construction addressed the overcrowding situation, even as it allowed racially segregated schooling to continue to be practiced.

Named after a prominent African American doctor, Hardy originally was designed to educate poor, black adolescents in a purportedly separate but equal setting in which community, academics, and athletics were of vital importance. The story of the child who turned the sod for Hardy Academy more than three decades ago offers important insights into the influence of education on those raised in the community.

Currently a community leader, the former child remembered the principal selecting her from among three finalists to dig the first shovels of soil for the new school site in an official ceremony attended by white and black citizens. She also recalled her African American teacher—who came from a more prosperous neighborhood "in a fancy car ... wearing fancy clothes"—studying with the finalists to help them deliver a speech "without a hint of dialect." Now an assistant principal in the school district, the individual attributed

> ... everything I am to my principal and teachers ... Being the child who was selected was so important to me. You know, I was so poor but I did not know it—My mother took my only dress that was brown, and tie-dyed it green, and my principal drove me to the event. You know, we had so much love in community, we had no idea we were poor ... But I know the hands that were on the plow that helped me and others to become what we are today.

When it became apparent that schools in the particular urban area would desegregate, the vast majority of the Hardy community residents embraced Martin Luther King's *I Have a Dream*[6] vision shared nearly a decade and a half earlier. They wanted equal education and access to facilities for the community's children. They longed for well-appointed schools and new books and instructional materials for teachers and students to use. They did not want "hand-me-down sports equipment and discarded books filled with other [white] people's names."

Just prior to racial integration taking place, the principal during that era organized a mixed-race event. He and the principal of an all-white school made "a private arrangement" to ease "the crossover process." The African American principal explained his perspective this way:

> When we were making preparations [to leave Hardy] I saw it was my responsibility to help youngsters make the adjustment—"to go as a friend and to find a friend" was my philosophy. I insisted that there would be no attitudes,

> no chips on shoulders, and that a steady school environment, as opposed to an angry environment, would be the order of the day. . . .

At that point in time, however, the Hardy community members did not understand that their support of desegregated schools would mean school attendance boundaries would be changed and the plot lines of the campuses in their neighborhood would be drastically altered, even extinguished. Furthermore, they had trusted the community leader charged to champion their rights in the integration process.

With the benefit of hindsight, an African American male teacher explained how the situation played out from his point of view:

> It was a big cover-up . . . The particular individual behind the petition signing [said] it was for integration to happen. In other words, the message he was given was that black kids would have the same opportunities as the white kids had. But the underlying thing . . . was that they were signing a petition to close the schools [in the Hardy community].

In what became lived as a forced desegregation scenario, the African American student population in the Hardy neighborhood became redistributed throughout a geographically large school district.[7] For instance, in the early 1990s, buses transported approximately 1,850 students to schools located a significant distance from their homes. Of this number, 45.7% were elementary students, 13.5% were intermediate students, 18.9% attended middle schools and 21.8% attended high schools (Hardy Academy, 1998–1999b). In the case of high school students living in one set of apartment complexes, they bewilderingly found themselves divided up and apportioned to four different campuses when the feeder pattern boundaries were redrawn. This enormous dislocation—forced black flight—of youth from their home community resulted in Hardy Junior High School being turned into an Alternate Behavior Campus and in the closure of the Hardy feeder high school as a comprehensive high school campus. Where the latter school was concerned, most of its trophies, photographs, and certificates disappeared and were believed to be destroyed (community members salvaged some), and the symbol on the high school was removed and later reported as having been stolen.

This devastating sequence of events incited serious, almost irreparable, mistrust between the institution of schooling and members of the Hardy community who had been long served by their neighborhood schools. It greatly eroded Hardy's community base by removing schools as hubs of activity and "gathering places" and split community members into a number of factions represented by as many as 16 rivaling Chambers of Commerce and interest groups that have yet to reconcile (Mack, 2002, p. 21A).

The following conversation between two local African American citizens captures the profound sense of loss and betrayal:

> Male: Well ... the community has lost a lot. I can say that because I still live in the community ... there is so much division. With African American people, we have normally been ... a very close group of people ... always had a sense of watching out for one another's kids ...
>
> Female: The village.
>
> Male: Yes. You hear the stories where it takes a village to raise a child ... That was the kind of concept instilled in our people. After integration happened and the community lost its schools and [some] teachers lost their jobs, a lot of things changed. There was a lot of animosity among people. People felt betrayed. People felt, you know, a sense of loss about something that had been right in our, in their, hands and just all of a sudden, you know—one day it is here and the next day it is gone ...
>
> Female: So it was like a domino effect ... You do away with our schools, you do away with our community leaders. Then what do we have left? We only have what is given us.

In the aftermath of the initial court order, many African American residents "felt taken advantage of." Furthermore, parents and community leaders who were once united became estranged. Close contact with black youngsters was not maintained to the same degree. Youth were scattered throughout the district and families typically did not have transportation to attend to problems as they previously had done when they walked to campuses near their homes. As one child then/adult now put it, "Respect, love, care ... all the personal things attached to school were gone ... "

For Hardy Junior High School, its story of school became one of serving "*bad* kids in a *bad* neighborhood." The immediate past principal remembers thinking: "What family would send their child to a school in that community?" He also recalls students in other schools being threatened when they misbehaved and told they would be sent "to Hardy" if their behavior did not improve. Any mention of Hardy, it seems, conjured up negative associations. These unfortunate connections, in turn, garnered the campus a reputation that would be hard to shake, even among first wave graduates. In the former principal's opinion, this type of storying did nothing to contribute to the image of the Hardy community, the image of Hardy School, the image of people who previously graduated from the campus, or the image of students who resided in the neighborhood.

Seventeen years passed. Then some black church and community leaders began to longitudinally assess the academic progress of Hardy students in their new settings. Viewed through an original Hardy teacher's eyes, schools and students had been stripped of "community and family support." Furthermore, the dominant attitude that "certain kids could learn and that certain kids could not learn" formed a pervasive "psychological barrier." Students raised in the community additionally found few or no African American teachers with whom to identify in their new school settings. For Hardy Junior High School's final principal, who became reassigned as an assistant administrator at another campus, not only were there changing laws with which to abide, there also were changing modes of discipline with which to come to terms. In his opinion, a strict, but loving, approach to discipline, an integral part of the African American experience of schooling in the historical neighborhood, was not an acceptable cultural practice in the integrated setting. Hardy Junior High School's final principal explained the situation this way:

> We were pretty strict—both the school and the community. [In the crossover], a generation of children learned freedom away from the watchful eyes of teachers and community members. The youngsters did not understand it well. In handling freedom, the students neglected to do what they should have done academically.

This sea change shift in circumstance contributed to declining achievement test scores and significantly influenced lives lived and stories told by African American students who then became the next generation of parents. It stirred up a host of perplexing issues that continue to torment Hardy community members. One especially controversial matter is how black youth score in comparison to white youth on achievement tests. The angst of the achievement gap (Williams, 1996) dilemma is best captured in the words of one of Hardy Academy's current African American faculty members who, following family tradition, chooses to reside in the community, although socioeconomically he could live elsewhere:

> My father lived in the Hardy community. So did my mother, my aunts and uncles. They still do.... They all passed the tests and graduated from high school. My parents both have graduate degrees. I graduated from high school and college.... But when I look at the ongoing decline in test scores in the African American population, I worry about my daughter. Will she become another statistic that speaks to the failure of African American children?

Prompted by deep-seated concerns such as this one, Hardy community leaders and school district officials returned to the federal justice system to explore better ways to serve the educational needs of students in the historical black community. A number of plans were entertained. A district official sketched how events unfolded in the following passage:

> First of all, the district has been under court order since 1977 for desegregation purposes. That court order required busing. Some people viewed it as forced busing. I guess it was since there was no choice. In 1994, some [Hardy] community members . . . approached the district about re-looking at that plan to see if there was something we could do to have neighborhood schools so that elementary children particularly would not have to be bused across the district . . . So we began that process with a visit to the Justice Department. The Department would not allow us to do that because we would return the [Hardy community] schools basically to a one-race school . . . And so we looked at various plans, held various focus group meetings in the community, and decided on the magnet school plan. [Hardy Academy] became one of the first of two magnet schools.

This birthing process gave rise to a new story of school for the campus formerly known as Hardy Junior High School and in its more recent past, Hardy Alternative Behavior Campus. The magnet school concept, which refocused Hardy's story of school, struck a compromise between the culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1992), intimate campus that community leaders desired for African American children and the judicial interpretation of the law. The campus became renamed Hardy Academy for the Mathematics, Science and Fine Arts. The intent, in its inaugural principal's words, was to change the "look, feel, and smell of school *and* how people acted." The purpose was to blot out the bad plot line that accompanied how earlier desegregation policies had been enacted. The development left other district schools with regular programs and all of the competitive sports teams, a turn of events that represented a significant departure from the founding story of school established at Hardy decades earlier.

Having traced significant changes to the plot line of Hardy's story of school to this point in time, the magnet school focus and two stories of reform introduced more recently to the school context will now be narrated. The "dueling banjos" metaphor and the events leading up to its embodied articulation at Hardy Academy follow after that.

THE MAGNET STORY OF SCHOOL

With the next round of federal court intervention, the district was not only legally bound to reinvent Hardy's story of school, it also was judicially mandated to increase black faculty members, improve curriculum and school programs, and enhance campus facilities, among other things. In order to comply with changes of this magnitude and in a timely fashion, the district needed financial support from external sources. Not just a small sum of money, but a great deal.

A grant was submitted to the United States Department of Education that resulted in a multimillion dollar magnet school award. According to the request for proposals, the funding was earmarked to eliminate minority isolation in elementary and secondary schools, to increase opportunities for all students to improve their academic performances, to develop innovative educational methods and practices, and to provide courses of instruction for students that would substantially strengthen their knowledge of academic subjects and their grasp of tangible marketable vocational skills.[8]

The award technically solved one of the district's challenges, but other pressing needs required attention as well—for example, personnel. The district needed to identify a principal who could "implement" Hardy's magnet program, as a district representative explained, "with no input into planning." Furthermore, there could be no changes to the plan. In the district representative's words, the terms were: "This is the program, these are the magnet themes. We are under court order, there are things you cannot change ... The decision-making was not site-based. It was a very tight plan ... top down."

Hardy Academy's first magnet principal, once selected, then was expected to hire the remainder of the faculty employing the same message: "These are the themes, this is what you will do ... " In this way, the story of Hardy Academy and the associated story of the principal and the teachers was "rolled out" from the Department of Justice to the school district and then to the school. In this manner, boundaries that reflected the requirements of the federal court order were placed on school activities. Through this method, those possessing the most power declared those with the least power responsible for breathing life and adding flesh to the bones of the mandated paper statement plan.

From the outset, the Hardy educators (most entirely new, less than a handful from the school's prior existence) recognized it would take more than legal stipulations or district edicts, more than a facade on an aging building, more than a new name on an old face, more than a band-aid on a long festering societal wound. The situation also would demand thoughtful attention and vigilant monitoring on their parts, although they recognized it was "delusional" to think that they could educationally turn around the social narrative tide of Hardy's school history—and all of its baggage and entailments—"on command."

From the beginning, the outstanding challenge, in the teachers' minds, was the fact the school was "fronted"[9] as a magnet school, but had not been, what they termed, "magnetized—from the bottom up." Their questions were: "How does a school become a magnet school? How do teachers become magnet teachers?" (Hardy Academy, 1998–1999b). Although there was a proliferation of stated goals, suggested activities, a formal evaluation plan, and the like—all sorts of compendiums denoting knowledge as attribute, no local models existed concerning how magnet life might be lived by schools, teachers, and students. Furthermore, no provisions or spaces were made available for teachers to develop the critically important narrative knowledge they would need to guide them through the politically charged, educationally challenging situation.

Meanwhile, the school district required additional funding to further develop the magnet program and to expand the magnet story of school into other school sites, which also were deserving of attention. A second United States Department of Education Magnet School Funding Grant was sought, but denied funding. The rejection struck a harsh blow to the school district. It signaled a potential setback of huge proportion. Without financial aid from other agencies, the fledgling magnet story of school already planted at Hardy could not continue to exist at its current level. This development, in turn, could set off a new iteration of problems in the already sensitive Department of Justice situation. Trapped in a funding and time line squeeze, the district needed alternatives.

TWO STORIES OF REFORM

Around the time that the school district's hope for a second round of federal funding was dashed, two potential sponsors—two sources of "soft money"—fortuitously appeared on the scene. The first one came in 1996–1997 and was an industry-inspired effort awarded by a number of businesses to an agency outside of the school district. Its focus was on the writing of science curriculum to develop the science magnet theme within some of the district's schools. Curriculum documents were to be created around and focused on the interests of the particular industry and, as the effort matured, would integrate other subject areas into a similar perspective. The corporate donors were forthright in their twofold objectives: they wanted to increase the potential pool of future employees available to their industry and to serve the community (Hardy Academy, 1997).

The second grant came on the heels of the first one in 1997–1998. Like Yaeger's second story of reform, it originated with a local office of a national reform movement that was created and funded by an East Coast philanthropist whose broad interest was in the improvement of public education. The award money flowed directly to Hardy where school-based decisions were made as to how it would be allocated. Centered on teachers' professional development, Hardy Academy's funded proposal was aimed at bridging community-school relations and using resources present in the urban center to richly educate students and restore African American confidence in institutions of schooling.

From the district's perspective, the two stories of reform satisfied its interests in two important ways. Both significantly eased felt budgetary constraints. And both lent strong support to the school district's foremost goal: the improvement of students' standardized test scores and, hence, school and school district ratings. What appeared to escape notice was that the two grants—one given, one chosen—from the paper documents onward—"were not on the same page, not in any way at all" with regard to how they would be executed.

I now shift from telling the two stories of reform to showing how they became lived and told at Hardy. Before I do so, I interject with the origins of *Dueling Banjos*. The description of the tune and the plot line of the movie with which it is commonly associated, shed important light on the stories I have narrated thus far and the one I will begin after the interlude.

DUELING BANJOS INTERLUDE

Dueling Banjos, a bluegrass tune immortalized in the 1972 action-adventure movie, *Deliverance*, consists of a melody played on a guitar and a counter melody played on a banjo. Originally titled *Feuding Banjos*, the contrasting melodies and instruments convey the *Deliverance* movie theme of city-dwellers confronting the forces of nature. In the film, four white middle-aged males take a weekend canoe trip down the Cahulawassee River in northern Georgia. Along the way, they encounter country folk who erroneously associate them with the power company that is about to "tame" the river. Whereas the country people display deep respect for the river, the city people appear oblivious to its natural power and presence and sadly unprepared for the challenges that it—and particularly the people who live near it—present.[10]

The highlight of *Deliverance* is the banjo duel scene. One of the businessmen unintentionally initiates the exchange by strumming chords on his guitar as he and his associates float down the river. Surprisingly, a country youth answers—from a porch on the shoreline—with solid chords executed on a banjo with a musical embellishment added to it. The two people/two instruments continue to interface in this manner. The impromptu exchange builds from melody-counter melody reply, to dissonance, to fractious tension, and finally to resolution. When the song concludes, the executive praises the young adult on his picking abilities—even concedes that he has lost "the duel." But the youth ignores him, the brief harmony that was shared, and returns to his world.[11]

REFORM STORY 1997–2000

Circling back, we have one story of reform set within the magnet school backdrop that was "parachuted" (Neilson, 1991, p. 64) into the school district in 1996, but not into the Hardy school context. We also have another story of reform, also in support of the magnet focus, which arrived in 1997 and was authored by the school-based educators and awarded to Hardy. However, the reform efforts—one slightly ahead of the other—did not form a significant presence on the school landscape until 1998, which was shortly before I was invited by Hardy's first magnet school principal and the faculty to work alongside them.

When I initially was introduced to the Hardy school milieu, two matters immediately were drawn to my attention by a resounding number of individuals. One was the "fragile" magnet story of school that understandably was in a rudimentary stage of development. The other was the presence of the first story of reform which appeared to have "grievously agitated" not community members, as one might have anticipated (given the sensitivity of the historical situation), but the school faculty. Concerns about "not being asked, but being told, to participate," "mandatory Saturday training sessions," a focus on literal, "not figurative or abstract," integrated lesson plans, and "the writing of dictated curriculum" abounded. Moral and ethical questions about whether schools—magnet campuses or otherwise—should be engaged in preparing students as "pools of potential employees" for specific enterprises also privately were raised. An associated issue had to do with teacher scholarship and whether the curriculum document, once prepared, would be sold for profit. Yet another contentious matter pertained to the school's name and whether or not it would be altered on the marquee to reflect the business-sponsored story of reform rather than the female educator who turned the sod for the school opening, an idea expectantly put forth by some community members. In short, the troubling issues ran the full gamut. The turmoil of change—with all the uncertainties and complexities about how to go about doing things, what should happen, and what might happen—had reached a fever pitch and teacher resentment was at an all time high in the relative short space of time before the second story of reform made its debut on the Hardy school landscape.

When the 1998–1999 school year began, Hardy's already deeply complex situation became further complicated by two subsequent developments: the large number of teachers who left the profession or gained employment elsewhere (reached a staggering 50% by 2000–2001) and the abrupt resignation of the beleaguered African American principal on whom too many hopes and dreams had rested and too many responsibilities and duties had been placed.

The unexpected departure of the principal, along with some of the lead teachers, created an unanticipated vacuum on Hardy's professional knowledge landscape that appeared to unravel in two ways. One was the loss' effect on the first story of reform; the other was the remaining faculty members' restorying of their positions on their school landscape. Each will be introduced separately. However, it increasingly will become evident that both are intimately connected.

Where the first story of reform was concerned, its stronghold—the person in the principal's office—was gone. The key individual through whom the reform effort operated was no longer in place. With this development, there was no one to urge, cajole, demand, and coerce the teachers into participation. This brought the theory of action underpinning the first story of reform to a temporary screeching halt. But something else was lost as well: any sense of a real or an imagined link between the two stories of reform.

Stunned and confused by their principal's and their colleagues' resignations, the remaining core group of teachers found themselves in a leadership void. The abrupt shift in circumstance brought to a close many personal and professional relationships which deeply saddened them. At the same time, it strangely opened up a space for them to increase their ownership of their professional knowledge landscape. It gave them room to become more active agents as opposed to people who could be acted upon. It afforded them the opportunity to become reflective rather than reactive. It offered them a measure of time within which to review the past and project themselves into the future in potentially more satisfying ways. And as a district representative proudly observed: "[When the leadership change happened], the faculty carried on . . . they had become a team. And [the new principal] appreciated what they had done. He respected the team and their efforts." The question that arises here is "How did the team of teachers do it?" And what, in turn, would this seemingly positive development have to do with the first story of reform and the connection foreshadowed earlier?

The teachers appeared to have taken hold of their professional knowledge landscape by rallying around the second story of reform over whose content, method, and expenditures they had both fiduciary *and* story line authority. Because that initiative's theory of action chose to work *with* the educators not *on* them (Lieberman, 1986, p. 28), they resonated with it. It offered a badly needed respite—provided a sense of continuity in the midst of overwhelming discontinuity. And it gave them the leverage to individually and collectively say "no" to a number of externally imposed expectations: one, that the school coordinator, who interfaced with the second story of reform, would be under the authority of those associated with the first story of reform and two, that the African American community outreach teacher would report precisely in the same manner.

Without intentional spaces within which to negotiate how people and stories of reform would relate to one another and develop shared stories, representatives outside the school and teachers inside of it wrangled over how the second story of reform would be lived. Friction also mounted as to how the second story of reform's funds would be allocated. Although the second story of reform sponsored the personal professional development activities of science teachers (as well as the other teachers) and all student enrichment activities conducted inside and outside the school, the teachers dug their heels in when the first story of reform attempted to use the second story of reform's budget to do the work for which the first monetary award was received. The teachers recognized they should not appropriate funds awarded for one set of reform work to conduct a second reform agenda for which money already existed—albeit in an out-of-district place. Their sensibilities warned them that this practice was not one in which minded professionals working in good conscience engaged.

The teachers' refusal to comply, in turn, was met by a strong degree of entitlement. And the intensity of the righteous indignation suggested that something else was at work in the situation. For example, had a prior arrangement possibly been struck with the principal who was no longer on the scene that the second story of reform would operate as a subsidiary, a spin-off effort under the thumb of the first? Could it have been that the remaining teachers, through their newfound voice and agency, interrupted the first story of reform's intention to take their places and use their second set of reform funding? Did the teachers, unbeknownst to them (and me), seriously alter a course of action that had been determined in "a different place and time?" (Crites, 1971, p. 271). These matters, which lurk on the boundaries of this particular narrative inquiry remain unknown, although ghost stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) of this or even grander sorts may have sat in the shadows of how events unfolded at Hardy. What is known is what transpired on the school landscape from that point onward.

When the teachers began to take responsibility for the second story of reform, they subtly restoried the first story of reform. In their reframing of their professional knowledge landscape, they adjusted how that reform effort was viewed. And its coin of currency became radically revised. No longer foundational to the campus' developing plot line, the teachers creatively recast it as something akin to "the pet project" of a "past administration." This pragmatic restorying formed a useful way to retell the past and to more strongly orient themselves as active agents with respect to forthcoming years. But it did not remove the nub of the point-counterpoint tension: the first story of reform.

Furthermore, the teachers peripherally knew two things from their extensive careers immersed in bureaucracies but did not expect either of them to happen—at least not quickly. One was that the first story of reform worked directly through the hierarchy of power and position. This meant that the school district was held immediately responsible for the school's success and that future funding would be contingent upon it. The seductive lure of "soft money" and esteemed partnerships, it seems, eclipsed fidelity to schools, teachers, and children on this occasion. Furthermore, the two reform projects—the first, local mid-southern; the second, eastern seaboard—appeared not to be on equal footing: partially because the second story of reform did not demand that the school district conduit do its biding and partially because the East Coast reform movement was a one-time only funding opportunity. Two was that a new-to-school teacher had entered the Hardy scene, had been placed in an elevated position to the other faculty members, and had embraced the plot line of the first story of reform as part of her personal narrative and identity. One way or the other, it was not long before a discovery shocking to others was made: the first story of reform had been shelved—set aside, in the words of people off the landscape, "like a stepchild in the corner." The story of reform not birthed by the teachers had been denied their fullest attention.

At this particular juncture, the animosity in the relationship between the teachers on the school landscape and those off the school landscape (who may have interpreted the situation as emblematic of teachers' lack of content knowledge and curriculum writing skills as well as their overall refusal to change) shifted and reemerged in a different form: tensions that played out among teachers within the Hardy school context. I now present a fine-grained narrative that illustrates the subtleties of how this situation happened. We have reached the point at which many teachers openly engaged in serious inquiry—individually, in the company of others, and on many places dotted on Hardy's professional knowledge landscape.

An Episode on the Hardy Landscape

The featured incident centers on an articulated difference of opinion that revealed stark dichotomies in the two theories of change associated with the two stories of reforms introduced to Hardy, dichotomies not unlike those present in *Dueling Banjos*. Educators who played key roles are featured: Harriet Anderson, a fine arts teacher and coordinator for the school-authored, national reform initiative, Missy Ibarra, a seventh-grade science teacher, and four teachers in a teacher research group setting. Anderson, Ibarra, and one of the four teachers featured in the research group were faculty members who came to the school when Hardy Alternate Behavior Campus assumed the magnet story of school.

The Budget Meeting

In the third year of the national reform initiative, while composing the initiative's budget, a fractious exchange occurred. The lead science teachers believed that Harriet Anderson had not been fair in funding science as a subject, or sensitive to the requests that the national reform movement finance a curriculum writer for the industry-based science integration story of reform.

Extenuating information hung in the background. Readers will recall that the industry-sponsored science effort—the first story of reform—was a multimillion dollar endeavor whose funds and plan were directed from outside the school and district. The national reform movement award (the second story of reform), on the other hand, was meant for whole-school change and represented a respectable sum, but a paltry amount in comparison to the first one. The Hardy educators had fiscal and decision-making control and authorial power over the latter award, but neither the teachers nor the principal possessed a modicum of authority up to that point in time as to how the industry-related science effort would be enacted or how funds would be distributed.

Conversations in Context and Community

Prior to Anderson sharing her disturbing budget meeting experience, I interviewed Hardy's new African American principal who recently had been appointed to the campus. In our conversation, he reflected on his new-to-school and new-to-position role:

> There is a tremendous amount that principals are called upon to do. You could not have even have begun to tell me some time ago that, as a principal, I would have to wear all these hats and ride all these horses, and all of them going in different directions sometimes . . . and the pressure associated with them pulling in different directions . . .

The principal's personal metaphors of "wearing hats" and "riding horses . . . pulling in different directions" aptly characterized the presence and influence of the two stories of reform that had become publicly revealed in the Hardy school context. They keenly portrayed how he personally found himself—physically, philosophically, and metaphorically—in the midst of multiple stories unfolding in conflicting rather than coalescing ways on Hardy's professional knowledge landscape.

Around then, I also conducted an interview with a community member. The individual ended our conversation by stating: "You know, [it] used to be more racial, now the struggle is more economic." The individual's choice of the word *struggle* formed a sharp reminder of Hardy's social narrative history at the same time as it strangely shadowed forth future conversations that would take place on the school landscape. It also echoed Frederick Douglass' historical observation that "if there is no *struggle*, there is no *progress*,"[12] a stand when enacted over time helped lay the foundation for the United States civil rights movement.

The Reform Team Meeting

Two weeks after the budget meeting, a regularly scheduled reform team meeting was held. Twelve school-based educators attended, representing the community, fine arts, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, special needs, technology, and the school administration. Two teachers were present at the meeting who normally would not be present: one language arts teacher, Kaye, who attended "to see what was going on," and Missy Ibarra, a science teacher. Ibarra replaced the two science representatives who normally participated, but who sent their regrets on this occasion. What was not known at the time was that Ibarra also was under the impression that Harriet Anderson *and* the reform team had been unfair to science.

The field notes[13] described what took place at the reform team meeting as follows:

> The meeting was conducted as an open conversation ... Harriet began ... by articulating the tensions felt in the school between and among the national reform movement goals and its financial and procedural limitations and the industry-based science project requests, particularly the desire for a curriculum writer. While science teachers could benefit greatly from the services of a curriculum writer, Harriet noted that the request did not fit within the reform movement funding guidelines ...

In the midst of the discussion, Missy Ibarra indicated she had many questions she wanted answered with respect to uses of resources and funding. The regularly audio-taped reform team conversations captured many productive exchanges between and among the Hardy Academy educators. Two are featured here.

Excerpt 1

Missy: Would the family nights proposed in science fit within the reform movement funding?
Harriet: Yes, absolutely.
Assistant Principal: Yes, very much so, under community outreach.
Principal: We need, however, to make sure that we stay a family, so the school does not become too fragmented by science

> night this, math night that, language arts night this. Whenever we put it together, let's try to stay a family.

In this passage, Missy and Harriet searched for common ground, soundly supported by their administrators. Hardy's principal particularly emphasized the importance of "staying a family" and not becoming "too fragmented." He subtly reined in a discussion that could pull the faculty apart in subject-dominated ways. He specifically named science as possibly being divisive, followed by mathematics and language arts. The reform meeting conversation continued as excerpt 2 indicates:

Excerpt 2

Harriet: Do we want to find community speakers on our own or use the agency that will help us make the real life applications we are seeking?

Missy: In science, we would like to have a weather forecaster come in, perhaps someone from the television station.

Anna: [Special Needs Representative] Would we have to contact the forecaster, then contact the agency, and get them together?

Harriet: There is a difference. Are you talking about a speaker? A workshop? A residency? A residency is when they come in and work with a class many times over.

Missy: That is not what the science department is interested in.... We only want them to be here twice at the most.

Harriet: So, in science, a residency is not a word you would want to use.

Missy: Right, I do not think so ...

Tom: [Social Studies Representative] You want guest speakers?

Missy: We want real people who are doing science. Science is what they do for their jobs ... But I do not see them coming in six times ...

Lorne: [Community Outreach Teacher] Can I make a suggestion? If the science department just wants speakers, I can get on the telephone and call ... a local newscaster ...

Missy: We would be more than happy if you would do that, believe me ... Well, I think because artists and authors in residence are already very established programs they should receive the bulk of the national reform funding. And other programs do not have that much need and should not have that much ...

Tom: They can be small amounts ...

Missy: Exactly, exactly.

Harriet: So, in the budget, it states science in residence, but what ultimately will happen is that you will have science speakers organized by the community outreach teacher . . .

Missy: And we know the established artists and authors in residence programs are very good programs for our children. . .

In this long passage, Missy and Harriet, along with Anna, Tom and Lorne, clarified how the funding available for community resources would best suit the science department's wishes. Missy carefully detailed perceived differences between the community needs of science and other subject areas. She also acknowledged that science had access to other funds and "does not have that much need." In doing so, Ibarra steered clear of the forceful demands trumpeted by some inside and outside the science department by soundly underlining what is best for "our children." Like her principal, Hardy's school "family" surfaced as a priority for her.

As these selected conversational passages illustrate, Missy Ibarra framed questions and gathered evidence at the school reform meeting to make sense of what was going on in her school context. To more deeply understand what she was up to and how she interpreted her experiences, further interviews were conducted with her. Ongoing conversations with Harriet Anderson also occurred. In this way, missing perspectives regarding what was really happening at Hardy Academy at the ground and underground levels would become visible.

Aftermath of The Reform Team Meeting

As planned, an interview with Missy took place. The following passage captures how she storied the dissonance between the two narratives of reform from where she was positioned on Hardy's school landscape:

> . . . The industry curriculum effort should be completely separate from the national reform initiative. The national program is not science-oriented; it is whole-school reform oriented. The industry program is based in science, and everybody else is supposed to tag along, ride with us. We are supposed to be writing science-based curriculum that includes other disciplines in it . . . And that has nothing to do with what the national program is talking about. That program has a whole different slant. And the industry effort [uses] school resources . . . [that] are supposed to be used in a much larger way, I think . . .

The conversation continued to reveal recent events as she saw them influencing her school milieu and a science colleague's personal and professional life and teaching practice.

> The science support teacher is doing 100% industry stuff [writing the curriculum document, preparing new grant proposals, attending meetings] and nothing else. It is eating up her life, and the rest of us are sitting back, saying: "We do not have any help here [with developing the science program and teaching the children at the school]." And the science support teacher is up until 2:00 or 3:00 a.m.. . . . She is responsible. I am doing the work at the school level as are three other teachers, but she is responsible. And it is killing her . . . . So the point is this: We have a real political thing going on here. In one corner is the industry effort . . . and [it] wants more money . . . And then there is the national school reform initiative that is not unreasonable at all.

Here, Missy indicates that the science support teacher's role was not so much about providing curricular and pedagogical assistance to Hardy teachers and students—the promise the school-based educators had been given—as it was about interfacing with the out-of-school industry effort and fulfilling that agenda. Missy concluded the conversation by saying:

> . . . I was the only science person at the [last] meeting and we certainly got a whole lot done . . . Harriet wrote me a note afterwards saying, "Thanks, Missy, for all the positive comments."

Following the reform team meeting, a conversation took place with Harriet Anderson that was described in the field notes this way:

> After the meeting, Missy told Harriet Anderson that she was led to believe that things were unfair . . . However, after personally attending the reform meeting, Missy discovered that what she and [others] had been told was 'propaganda.' It was clear to Missy that books could have been purchased and conferences attended with money from the reform movement budget, but the funds could not be used to have someone write the science curriculum [document].

The text continued:

> Missy saw this [differentiation] as completely understandable; the science effort was already supported by the major multi-year industry grant. Missy told Harriet it was unfair that Harriet had been confronted at the [previous] budget meeting . . . Missy apologized by stating that she had always seen Harriet as one of the most fair and levelheaded people in the school and her opinion was positively reinforced by how Harriet conducted the meeting. Missy then paid Harriet a high compliment: she said that she was very proud of how Harriet approached the reform work.

In this excerpt, the reason why Missy attended the school reform meeting finally becomes disclosed. After the fact, Missy informs Harriet, a colleague with whom she has a commonplace as an original Hardy faculty member, that she and others had been told questionable things that did not align with what she knew about Harriet and what she personally experienced at the reform meeting. Missy subsequently discarded the misinformation presumably given to her by some of her science colleagues as "propaganda." She then went on to demonstrate her method of managing what she deemed "a real political" situation: she returns to original sources and her sense making of them, even when valued colleagues are concerned. In this way, Missy resisted blindly supporting the first story of reform (which was inside her department and included some subject area colleagues) *and* unquestionably favoring the second story of reform (that afforded teachers' choice and voice and involved colleagues of longstanding, one of whom was Harriet).

Later, another interview was conducted with Ibarra in which Missy further anchored her experiences in context. This time she lifted the problematic situation up and placed it within the broader horizon of two theories of action duplicitously unfolding as "crisscrosses in beliefs" and related the "inevitable clash" to intentions "not motivated to move along smoothly":

Researcher: So how are things going?

Missy: Everything seems to be moving in a positive direction in the national reform initiative. But there is the inevitable clash with the industry-sponsored science effort, which is... not motivated to move along smoothly .... People get irritated with it and there is so much pressure coming down from the top ... We are doing curriculum writing and there is this heavy, heavy push ... for us to make progress .... People are really frustrated ... It takes up huge amounts of time.

Researcher: ... And with the whole-school reform initiative?

Missy: We get to pick what we want to do. But teachers do not get to pick in the [industry-sponsored science] effort ... So many crisscrosses in beliefs, it is bizarre...

The conversation continued:

Researcher: How would you characterize Hardy ... to sum it up, in your experience?

Missy: Well, there is a lot of struggling ... that goes on to meet the level of quality that each one of us wants for ourselves and ... for the school.... There is a lot of struggle in the school in order to become your personal and the students' personal bests .... But then, there is a lot of

> growth that is going on . . . because people learn to deal with things to become the best they can be. So the school is a huge struggle, and it is working its way slowly, but surely, upward. And our principal struggles hard alongside us. . . . There is more struggle *here* than at other schools that I have been in; I do not know why. I just do not know why.

In the closing excerpt, Missy Ibarra further burrows into the felt tensions between the two stories of reform and their change theories. Once again, she takes her analysis up a notch. She situates the push and pull forces in a larger frame: the overall struggle of a black neighborhood school, with a rich history but maligned identity, trying to improve itself. She makes it clear that the struggle plot line was well known by her, other teachers, students, and her new African American principal whom she saw laboring alongside her, trying to reach "the desired level of quality." Furthermore, although she knows struggle is a vital part of learning in all school settings, she recognizes it as being in much greater abundance—forming a much more potent presence—at Hardy than in other school contexts in which she had taught. Missy's comment dovetails in an uncanny way with the community member's view, shared earlier, that struggle takes many forms—wears many guises, one of which is oppression and overcoming it. It also harkens back to Douglass' view concerning the basic necessity of struggle to African American progress.

About the same time as Missy arrived at her critical insights, members of the teacher research group situated elsewhere in the school context also keenly identified differences in the approaches taken by the two reform initiatives. In the particular excerpt, Anna and Kaye are experienced teachers whereas Marla and Genieve are in their beginning years. Genieve, although new to the teaching profession, had a previous career in business. Anna, readers will recall, regularly participated in reform team meetings. Kaye, on the other hand, attended one meeting, the same one that Missy did.

> Anna: We have competing grants here . . .
> Marla: Actually, dueling grants . . .
> Kaye: They *are* dueling grants . . .
> Marla: (Hums theme from *Dueling Banjos*)
> Anna: And some of us, like Kaye, are heavily involved in different aspects of both [stories of reforms].
> Genieve: And can see different underlying principles as to how people are worked with and the respect given teachers and their knowledge . . .

Kaye: (Referring to the industry-based science effort) Do you treat people well by bleeding them dry like turnips?[14]

Genieve: Well, the differences are not surprising . . . [One] is a huge philanthropic endeavor founded on high ideals; the other has corporate sponsors.

Anna: The industry-based science effort is not philanthropic [in the same sense].

Kaye: It is looking for workers [for the particular industry].

Genieve: It is founded on the principles on which Wall Street is founded.

Marla: Repeats *Dueling Banjos* theme (with personally crafted lyrics added to fit the tune) . . . "We need more money . . . Let's go check out the schools."

In this excerpt, the four members of the teacher research group naturally latch onto the "dueling banjos" metaphor and use it to unlock their understanding of the once uneasy, now tumultuous relationship between the two stories of reform introduced to Hardy's professional knowledge landscape. Kaye and Marla's voiced metaphor strikes a chord with what the research group members knew through experience. The metaphorical hypothesis, in turn, facilitates the teachers' adept pinpointing of differences in principles, approaches, sources of funds, and personal experiences. It furthermore helps them to consciously portray the two theories of action that they lived in an as-close-to-humanly possible kind of way. The teachers, in community with one another and in a safe space, intentionally put words to experience—speak truth to power—about the tension-filled interplay between the two stories of reform that awkwardly, though necessarily, became merged as one in their personal and collective knowing. They perceptively refer to melody–counter melody exchanges and skillfully depict growing friction that escalated to open conflict on Hardy's professional knowledge landscape. And they cast the root problem, not in terms of people or personalities, not in terms of humanities/arts and sciences, not in terms of curriculum and instruction, not in terms of outsiders and insiders, not in terms of heroes and villains, but in terms of two different meta-narratives concerning the role of schools in society and their contributions to an imagined future. In short, the teachers connect what occurred in the living of school reform at Hardy with a larger societal issue of clarion challenge. In a compact way, they merge their local experiences with a growing global phenomenon: full strength corporate authorship of stories of schools, stories of teachers, stories of students—in a nutshell, available stories of life.

On the precipice of multiple teachers lodged in different places on Hardy's landscape simultaneously mining potentially interlocking discoveries, the school year ended—in typical fashion—with unresolved issues left floating in mid-air. While *chronos* (measured time)—in terms of the academic year—had expired—*kairos* (psychological time) in the longitudinal sense of storied lives lived on storied landscapes—would extend unceasingly into the future. And the cacophony between the two stories of reform presumably would spew over to the forthcoming school year, as it had done in the past.

This time around, however, the situation became drastically altered. The new cycle (Zerubavel, 1981) would begin with many key characters notably absent: Missy Ibarra, who retired from the profession; Marla, the observant beginning teacher who left teaching; the science support teacher who moved to a new campus *with* the first story of reform, and the science department head, an original hire teacher, like Missy and Harriet, who transferred to another magnet school *without* the first story of reform (but in a surprise turn of events requested to return to Hardy after the science support teacher left). In addition to these massive changes, one other shift of significant mention took place. The new principal who, readers will recall, harbored concerns about "different hats" and "horses pulling in different directions," discretely filled the science vacancies, appearing to recognize that he also could not alter Hardy's past from a community or a school history point of view. At the same time, he evidently had come to know that he, like the teachers whose stories served as his models, was an active agent who could positively contribute to the campus' and the children's futures. He strategically positioned an African American teacher in the science support role, knowing her mind was not closed to science in its fullest forms of inquiry, but also that she was awake and quietly discerning of underlying considerations and what they might mean for teachers and students and the stories of teaching, learning, and life that could be lived and told, and relived and retold, on Hardy's ever evolving, constantly fluctuating landscape.

NOTES

1. A notable exception is Hatch (1998).
2. *Dueling Banjos*, originally titled *Feuding Banjos* is a bluegrass tune written and performed by Don Reno and Arthur Smith and used without their permission in the movie, *Deliverance*. Reno and Smith sued the film company for rights infringement and won. See http://www.filmsite.org/deli.html
3. *Deliverance*, written by James Dickey and produced by John Boorman, was a popular adult action-adventure movie released in 1972. It was nominated for three Oscars—best picture, best director, and best film editing—but received no awards.

4. The term, minority populations, typically refers to groups of people whose ethnicity is nonwhite. Again, this term is a confounding expression in the mid-southern state because nonwhite groups form the majority population. Recognizing how problematic the expression is, I nevertheless have opted to use it as it is commonly understood.
5. The average width of the unpaved streets in the Hardy community is 20–22 feet in comparison to the paved surfaces of other city streets that average 24 feet in width.
6. Martin Luther King delivered his *I Have a Dream* speech on the steps at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC on August 28, 1963. Coincidentally, 1963 was the same year that Hardy Junior High School was constructed as a segregated school setting.
7. The school district spans over a 100-square-mile radius and is listed among the largest school districts in the United States.
8. See United States Department of Education, http://www.ed.gov
9. Hardy was fronted as a magnet school in two ways: its name was changed on the school's front entrance and its marquee, and the magnet school reference was introduced to all materials that were distributed.
10. http://www.filmsite.org/deli.html, 1–9.
11. Ibid. 1–9.
12. Frederick Douglass, *Address on West India Emancipation* (August 4, 1857).
13. I am grateful to Dr. Cylette Willis who worked with me for less than six months during the Hardy inquiry. Our joint work is captured in "Excavating Teacher Knowledge in Context: A Narrative Approach," an article that is in revision.
14. This rhetorical question preceded the largest corporate collapse in America that left many white- and blue-collared workers without jobs and pension plans.

CHAPTER 5

"DUELING BANJOS"

A Reflective Coda

In Chapter 4, the backdrop and melody-counter melody plot line development of the two stories of reform introduced to Hardy Academy were presented. So, too, were an individual teacher's and an amalgam of several teachers' narrative knowledge reconstructed. This framing and reframing of the living of the two reform efforts was undertaken to show the complexities that arise when two school reform initiatives are simultaneously experienced and subsequently storied with educators positioned as authors, not merely actors, supporting and enacting mandates imposed by others.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE STORY OF COMMUNITY—COMMUNITY STORIES

Introducing Chapter 4 with the story of community—community stories paired combination provided readers with insights into the Hardy community one might come to know if one were invited to participate in extensive walking tours over time. Life was breathed into the past as the sense making of adult community members and of previous and current school administrators and teachers became intermingled. In the process, background tensions between stability and change, past and present, black and white, and segregation and desegregation were brought to light. These multiple tensions built up to the *Dueling Banjos* interlude and finally to the surfacing of the metaphor.

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THE INFLUENCE OF STORY OF SCHOOL—SCHOOL STORIES

Where Hardy's story of school—school stories were concerned, a long version of the social narrative history of the school, stretching back to the settlement of the community, was featured alongside a short version that, for people other than community members, began with the school's reinvented plot line. The differences between the two tellings are enormously helpful in understanding what was available to be known about the school context and how that, in turn, shaped teachers' knowledge. Both portray striking contrasts between an imagined future and the lived present. Both depict palpable struggles between minority and majority, black and white, poverty and wealth, and conservation and change.

When the magnet story of school was introduced to the Hardy landscape, another set of dichotomies emerged: appearance and reality, and knowledge as given/ordered by others, and knowledge as narratively reconstructed through experience by self in relationship with others. Then, too, there was the idea of "doing things right" versus "doing the right thing," a tension steeped in moral implications. Present school district officials are particularly caught up in "doing things right," according to the Department of Justice decree, after a state history of not "doing the right thing." To a local historian, the institutional legacy was one of "shortsighted decision making coupled with long-ranged impact." The district, it seems, had not projected itself into the future and imagined the tectonic shifts that would take place in student population and socioeconomic base, although "tell-tale signs were clearly on the wall."

All of the dual positions I have introduced thus far were abundantly present on Hardy's professional knowledge landscape. I now move onto reflective comments concerning the two stories of reform—one reform story.

TWO STORIES OF REFORM—ONE REFORM STORY

The tensions between two shaping forces and one school context/one faculty (composed of individual teachers) to be influenced prominently appeared in the reform story section. But significant themes also emerged between outsiders and insiders and original faculty members and newcomers as well. Then, too, the expected presence and unexpected absence of the principal was evident. Again, the matter of "authority without" and "authority within" rose to the fore, as did a shift in how the first story of reform became relived and retold. Once primarily situated off of Hardy's school landscape and played out between teachers and non-teachers, the central difficulty reemerged and became replayed as a tension between and among faculty members in in-school places at budget meetings concerning the second story of reform. Also, just below the surface the image of education as preparing students for a full range of life/work possibilities and the image of education as targeting certain youth for particular work force/economic needs peeked through. The latter refrain was eerily analogous to the alarm the female community member sounded about the "domino effect" and "having [only] what is given [us]," a visual image that brought the covert manipulation of black and white objects—black and white relations—sharply into focus. In an ominous point-counter point way, readers were taken back to a different time and a different "stepchild in the corner": the ancestors of those who currently comprise the underserved population.

STORIES OF TEACHERS—TEACHERS' STORIES

While not addressed separately, the stories given to teachers (and principals) and the stories lived by teachers (and principals) over time also were sprinkled abundantly throughout Chapter 4. Most important, the dual positions of teachers as conduits *through* which knowledge flows to students and the view of teachers and students personally and socially reconstructing knowledge in relationship *with* one another stood out (Olson, 2000, p. 183). Furthermore, teachers as authors and actors of school reform and teachers scripted as characters to enact particular reform plot lines devised by others appeared at each and every storied intersection. Then, too, tensions within and between teachers as conservers and renewers of schools as well as of their profession were evident.

Dueling Banjos Metaphor

The many dualities undergirding life at Hardy Academy—which constituted vastly complicated living—became fused in the teachers' embodied, embedded claiming of the "dueling banjos" metaphor. In keenly perceptive ways, the metaphor commingled the struggles of the African American people, the Hardy community, the neighborhood schools, and teachers and students. It succinctly captured how the teachers implicitly experienced the two stories of reform—not as cohesive efforts—but as dueling plot lines arising from different philosophical and political positions concerning the relationship between schools and society. In the specific text, readers will recall how the critical analysis—the uncovering of the underpinnings of the reform initiatives—occurred, amazingly with a beginning teacher taking the lead, serving as catalyst, initiating how thought and experience would be powerfully melded together. She shared her metaphoric knowing with her colleagues through giving them back their stories interlaced with the "dueling banjos" imagery, tune, and eventually her improvised lyrics. Her musical reframing opened the floodgates and facilitated the reinterpretation of the veteran teachers' experiences accumulated over time. Much like the instruments in *Dueling Banjos*, a second beginning teacher, Genieve, chimed in and rounded off the discussion with her personal practical knowledge of the second perspective—business—her former career. She reminded her colleagues that businesses need workers to generate profit. For this reason, both people (human resources) and the river (natural resource), as in the *Deliverance* plot line, must be harnessed for "progress" to take place. Furthermore, she implied, still following the *Deliverance* plot line, that those concerned with nature in its human form (teachers' professional development/repairing community relationship) and those interested in industrial development (production of science curriculum/students as workers), must act on or through the same agents: teachers. The impossible contradiction becomes irrevocably entangled by the bald fact that educators, by virtue of their human condition, are unable to satisfy two reform agendas or even one reform agenda in a purist form. Instead both theories of change necessarily become filtered through each teacher's personal practical knowledge developed in and from his/her experiences arising from the enactment of the stories of reform (Olson & Craig, 2001). In short, each teacher—by human necessity—must resolve the duel within his/herself and in community with others. For instance, Missy, Harriet, Anna, Kaye, and Hardy's new principal could live and tell cover stories about one or the other of the stories of reform, but underneath there would be a real story of the conjoined personal sense each individual made of the dual change efforts. Even if irreconcilable tensions between the stories were denied or acknowledged only in hushed tones in interviews and teacher research conversations and not in public places on Hardy's professional knowledge landscape, they would still exist and create gnawing disturbances for those trying to "cover up" rather than "trying to uncover" their knowing (Crites, 1979). Such stress undoubtedly would accelerate teachers' and principals' decisions to leave Hardy as a place of employment and/or to abandon their profession.

One Hardy teacher was explicit about how she managed the tension as it emerged in her personal practical knowledge. In her sense-making, Missy Ibarra sketched how the two stories of reform were lived in her professional life—one, legislating and demanding science curricula written by her with her colleagues "tagging along, riding along"; the other, approaching her "not unreasonab[ly]" as a knowing and knowledgeable teacher who is in-tune with her school and community context and uniquely positioned to determine the kind of changes that need to be made. But Missy not only elucidated the stories. She went on to show how she reconciled them, particularly after the disagreement that occurred at a budget meeting she did not attend. Nesting the problem in "crisscrosses in beliefs" that precipitated "inevitable clashes," Ibarra tested the "unfair" claim (presumably issued by proponents of the first story of reform) in a primary source environment: a *live* school reform meeting. After that gathering, she carefully balanced what she came to know second hand with what she had experienced first hand. Through this process, her newly formed knowledge became the provisional sense she carried forward to new situations on Hardy's professional knowledge landscape.

From a school context perspective, this interval of the Hardy drama regrettably ended in an impasse, much like the banjo duel in *Deliverance.* Faculty turnover, along with the school's long contested history, the neophyte nature of the magnet story of school, and the dichotomous stories of reform, left Hardy Academy in much the same "no win" situation—with no middle ground found between key players because few would remain on the scene and part of the school's history would again be lost. Whereas the second story of reform—the teacher professional development, community-based reform chosen by the teachers in consultation with the Hardy community was more naturalistic and sensitive to Hardy's school and neighborhood stories and their atonement, the first story of reform—the industry focused, science effort—moved forcefully toward the future, less concerned about the past because it was not part of that agenda.

And so, the overriding theme—the story of struggle—persisted. Historically lived as oppression, its net broadened and the Hardy experience heightened in intensity on this particular occasion. Furthermore, educators and students groomed to be workers inched unbelievably close to becoming main characters in an unmediated version of a business story "to live by" in a longstanding community that has been the object of much dispute and whose children's futures remain uncertain.

CHAPTER 6

TWO STORIED SCHOOL CONTEXTS

Influences on Teachers' Knowledge

None of us are to be found in sets of tasks or lists of attributes; we can only be known in the unfolding of our unique stories within the context of everyday events.

—Paley (1990, p. xii)

Both the T. P. Yaeger Middle School and Hardy Academy inquiries captured the unfolding social narrative histories of two geographically close, but racially and socioeconomically different, communities and used their unique institutional backdrops to illuminate the reform experiences of teachers—Bob, Daryl, Charles, and Howard in the case of Yaeger, and Missy, Harriet, and members of the teacher research group in the case of Hardy. Both Yaeger and Hardy, as readers will recall, were given founding stories of school that were shaped by political, socioeconomic, racial, and cultural forces, none of which were neutral. With time, the stories became altered—most significantly during the desegregation years—when neither campus could continue to function as a single-race school. As a result, the story of T. P. Yaeger Middle School took on a gifted and talented plot line which allowed "the brightest and the best" students representing all racial and cultural groups in the city to attend the campus. Meanwhile, students in the chronically impoverished Hardy community boarded buses to attend white schools that, in turn, gave Hardy Junior High School the story

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of an Alternate Behavior Campus. Changes in both contexts took place in attempted mind-altering ways. A subsequent adaptation also was additionally made to Hardy—the introduction of the magnet story of reform—in an effort to redeem the negative effects that availing the African American community of regular program schools *and* its children caused.

More recently, T. P. Yaeger Middle School and Hardy Academy had new stories of reform introduced to their contexts to change their stories of school and the available narratives teachers, students, and others could live and tell within them. At Yaeger, the first story of reform clearly was in a dominant position whereas the second one was in an investigative phase. The Yaeger teachers chaffed at the top-down approach to professional development associated with the first story of reform, the state-directed, national reform movement one. At the same time, they did not appear to recognize that the second story of reform enabled them to scrutinize the first story of reform's practices. By way of contrast, the Hardy teachers were encased in quite a different circumstance. At Hardy, the second story of reform became somewhat of a haven for them—a world of "could be" in terms of possible relationships between the school and the community. Its "high ideal," as Genieve worded it, was well known by them.

Having established these points, I particularly want to set the models of teaching reform at Yaeger beside the industry-focused, science-based curriculum effort at Hardy because they have much in common. They sharply bring to the forefront issues of great importance concerning the interface of teachers' knowledge and stories of school/stories of reform.

The first obvious commonality between the models of teaching reform at T. P. Yaeger Middle School and the industry-sponsored science effort at Hardy Academy was that both involved curriculum integration. Teaching models were seen as the driving force behind the subject integration process at Yaeger whereas science content relevant to the particular industry would pave the way at Hardy. In both cases, something other than teachers' knowledge formed the position of strength from which the stories of reform operated. Neither story of reform, it seems, took into account that knowledgeable teachers were the agents of change (Rust & Freidus, 2001)—not the scripts arising from the content nor processes given to them. But this was just the beginning of the similarities. I continue.

As we move on, we see that both the stories of reform involved the codification of knowledge. The Yaeger teachers, for example, were to write integrated lesson plans using the models of teaching approach whereas the Hardy teachers were to write "mandated curriculum" employing the industry-related content as the central feature around which to form integrated plans. The shared theory that appeared to sit in the background was that the written documents would represent an in-between step between teachers' knowing and not knowing how to teach integrated curriculum—that if teachers dutifully committed basic lesson plans to paper, they would somehow get the complex act of teaching right. For those in charge, the lesson plans became the "tunes to be played" rather than teachers' practices—informed by their knowledge refined through experience—being "the instrument teachers would play upon" (Oakshott, 1975, p. 58). Not surprisingly, the lesson plan writing, in the view of the Yaeger and Hardy teachers, became a disembodied exercise that made highly procedural the knowing-in-the-moment kinds of teaching that pervaded their practices and disregarded the contexts in which their students learned. Also, the more the teachers felt pressured to instrumentally satisfy the external criteria of the method or content, "cleanly, not creatively" in the case of Yaeger and "literal[ly], not figurative[ly] or abstract[ly]" in the case of Hardy, the increasingly perturbed they became. The mandated lesson plan writing conflicted with rather than complemented their instructional roles, consumed enormous amounts of planning and leisure time (Saturdays in the case of Hardy teachers), and was understood to be more for other educators' consumption than for the development of their knowledge, indeed, their scholarship (Shulman, 1998). Thus, the supportive help lent by the particular stories of reform was experienced by the Yaeger and Hardy instructors as additional obstacles that prohibited them from acting on their knowledge and conducting their work on behalf of students in ways that made sense and held value for them.

Not only was the writing of integrated lesson plans problematic to both sets of teachers, the professional development methods also were troublesome. At Yaeger, the training was interpreted as "hindering teachers' creativity." At Hardy, "mandated Saturday training sessions" were seen as foreign to teachers' "more creative" ways of knowing. In both instances, specific competencies related to integrated teaching became the central foci. In both cases, expert knowledge (one of a particular discipline, the other of models of teaching) was imposed on teachers without any acknowledgment that the teachers already held knowledge vital to the topic at hand. For example, school stories, teacher stories, and student stories—other important *in situ* understandings—teachers brought to the lesson-planning table—were overlooked—rendered immaterial, off topic. With no room to co-create curriculum stories and relegated to the periphery of their own professional development, the teachers believed that not only their sense of knowing was diminished but their identities as professionals and human beings were devalued as well. Furthermore, they intuitively knew, from their years of teaching experience, that full sense cannot be made of paradigmatic knowledge unless it is strategically intertwined with narrative knowledge in the educative process. Simply put, personal and collective meaning needs to be made of paradigmatic ideas (Bruner, 2002). If not, disembodied knowledge—half life knowledge resulting from "half life curriculum" (Aoki, 1989–1990, p. 3) and what the teachers subsequently termed "half baked teaching"results.

A further similarity between the Yaeger models of teaching reform and the Hardy industry-based science effort needs to be highlighted as well. In both the Yaeger and Hardy instances, one could easily attribute how the situations unfolded to the second story of reform—the particular national reform movement's theory of change—which undoubtedly took a more respectful and hospitable view of teachers in terms of their knowledge, agency, and roles in regard to change. In short, it enhanced rather than constrained their sense of professionalism. Still, another entailment needs to be considered. In both cases, the second reform movement appeared—in a temporal sense—slightly after the first one. In both situations, the teachers had a silver of time to further develop their repertoires of experience; hence, their personal practical knowledge arising from it. In both contexts, the teachers, implicitly in the Yaeger example and explicitly in the Hardy example, awakened to their shaping effects not only on their school landscapes but on the stories of reform introduced to them. Hence, it was not only that the second stories of reform (readers will recall they were the same reform movement in both cases) were more inviting to the teachers and resonated with their knowledge, it also was the teachers' growing recognition that they needed to be more discerning and active so that they and their school landscapes could weather the issues associated with *living* the stories of reform and not feel completely overwhelmed—overtaken—by them.

The Hardy situation also was burdened by another entailment. Whereas Yaeger's funds were made available by the first major reform movement and redistributed by the state agency, Hardy's funds were held by a reputable organization outside the immediate school district. For the Hardy teachers, the troubling thing was not just about not having authority and access to the reform plan's plot line and award (as was the Yaeger teachers' similar concern), it also was connected to the perceived intentions of the primary donors. While the philanthropist who funded Yaeger's first story of reform articulated a broad educational agenda, the sponsors of Hardy's first story of reform were more narrowly interested in cultivating workers to fill a workforce gap and better serve their sector of the economy. This focus, as Anna and Genieve at Hardy rightly pointed out, was philanthropy in a higher pitched—indeed, higher stakes—key. But the teachers' concern was not simply about specificity. Rather, it was about finding themselves not on the edge, but scripted as main characters in a meta-story they did not devise and with which many did not agree. It was the creeping sense of having their profession—their life's work—appropriated to serve the will of a dominant interest group in society. It was about teachers perceiving that they were required to use their pedagogical and moral influence in ways that may lead predominantly minority youth to certain kinds of employment, but not to open their eyes to life and the full range of possible stories they could live and have the inalienable right to know they can live as American citizens. In many ways, it boiled down to teachers' heterocentric[1] *in loco parentis* roles—wanting and doing for all children what "the best and wisest parent" would want and do (Dewey, 1904/1969, p. 7). And the teachers' uneasiness pertained to equal opportunity in every imaginable sense of the word—not simply according more to underserved youth than what historically has been the case.

In both the Yaeger and Hardy chapters, readers also witnessed the educators attaching their personal narratives to the Yaeger and Hardy stories of which they found themselves a part. The African American principal who quickly took up the struggle alongside the Hardy faculty solidly illustrated this point. So, too, did Howard at Yaeger, who fully recognized the issues surrounding diversity and how the Yaeger faculty was not indicative of the district's racial profile. The same can be said of the other educators in the narratives, particularly beginning teachers, Marla and Genieve, who fully engaged in active teacher inquiries from the moment they set foot on Hardy's landscape.

In addition to educators' knowing where they fit with existing stories of school, the teachers at Yaeger and Hardy also were alert to what might be considered imperceptible changes—at least from others' points of view. Charles, a teacher from Yaeger, for example, discerned that a particular shift in Yaeger's story of school approached through the models of teaching a story of reform would narrow the range of stories of teachers available to him. And Hardy's core group of teachers recognized from the outset that they must painstakingly situate their practices with respect to Hardy's story of school/stories of reform due to the social narrative history of the community and the sensitivities concerning how the institution of schooling was received in the neighborhood. In both instances, teachers paid great heed to the subtle nuances of their school narratives, experienced consonance/dissonance, and decided present actions as well as whether or not to continue or leave schools and/or the profession based on the narrative fit/lack of fit between personal and institutional stories.

Yet, not only were the teachers' identities embedded in and shaped by school narratives, they also were connected to other teachers' identities and what teachers do—and decide not to do—with each other. The multiple knowledge community interactions between and among Bob, Daryl, Charles, Howard, and their Yaeger colleagues demonstrate this point. Furthermore, the Hardy teachers' firmly saying "no" and affording less than full-blown attention to the industry-related science effort showed educators morally defining who they are in particular stories with respect to how colleagues position themselves and what they are thinking. A second Hardy example was what transpired in the exchange between Harriet Anderson and Missy Ibarra in the aftermath of the budget meetings: the one that went afoul, the other which was more fruitful.

These points not only speak to teachers' identities on shifting professional landscapes, they exemplify how teachers necessarily confer with one another to make narrative sense of paradigmatic knowledge meted out to them in authoritative and authoritarian ways. In the knowledge community interactions at Yaeger and the "dueling banjos" conversation at Hardy, communications that initially focused on the paradigmatic immediately became transformed and intermixed with revelations of the personal. Thus, Daryl at Yaeger admitted to "being in the woods without a flashlight" whereas Kaye, a teacher in the research group at Hardy, questioned the logic of people "bled dry like turnips." The substance of what teachers as learners were supposed to know and do automatically became merged with what they, as individuals and as members of particular knowledge communities, were *knowing* and *doing* in particular ingots of time. The propositional became discussed in non-propositional terms, the generic surfaced in the particular, time-independent matters became contingency-ridden, and relations between concepts paled in comparison to relationships between and among people and the interactive exchange of ideas. In short, the paradigmatic became boiled down to its essence, blended with teachers' narrative knowing in point-counterpoint ways, and its import assessed with respect to teachers' biographies, their storied knowledge of their students, and the tension-filled situations that unraveled in their school milieus.

This storied analysis leads to the metaphors—the final point I wish to take up in Part I. When I began the research at T. P. Yaeger Middle School and Hardy Academy, not only did I find that I entered into a world of story—which I adjusted and re-adjusted the story constellation matrix to accommodate—I found myself becoming a part of a metaphorical world in which novel phrases were used to encapsulate and invite dialogue about inordinately complex, interrelated experiences. Not only did I come into contact with flashlight and turnip metaphors such as those employed earlier by Daryl and Kaye, the hat and horse metaphors used by Hardy's principal, the individually tailored monkey metaphors voiced by Bob, Charles, Daryl and Howard, and "the stepchild in the corner" metaphor articulated by people in Hardy's out-of-school places (which the teachers subsequently came to know), I also encountered metaphors that groups of educators naturally entertained to unburden tacit meaning stored in bodies, minds, and situations over particular stretches of time. Living alongside the school-based educators, I came to see the uniqueness and relevance of these storied metaphors to their tentative meaning making. I also recognized how intimately context specific the interpretations of these metaphors could be and how the contexts themselves may have lent to the educators' identification of them. Readers will recall that *The Monkey's Paw* was a short story in the eighth grade anthology used at Yaeger and that Banjo Lane was a street the teachers passed by as they drove to Hardy each day. Furthermore, *Dueling Banjos* was a tune that the string and keyboard students frequently practiced in the performing arts portion of Hardy's magnet story of school. In these two cases, meanings fused together in highly intricate ways, in turn, were understood and reinterpreted by others immersed in the same set of events. These metaphors not only showed that stories of reform introduced to particular school contexts are knowable and known to teachers, but also the manners in which they are knowable and known are highly sophisticated. In fact, they are so intensely complicated, yet deceptively simple, that their meanings—and the almost code word ways in which they appeared in discussions—would be lost on people not spending sustained periods of time interacting with teachers and principals on their professional knowledge landscapes. At Yaeger, I concentrated on Bob's, Charles's, Daryl's and Howard's knowing to illuminate the manner in which the monkey's paw metaphor threaded through their personal practices and the backdrop of Yaeger's continuing institutional narrative. At Hardy, something different occurred. I followed the narrative pulse—the fluid nature (Schwab, 1960)—of the inquiry and felt compelled to wander further afield and pay more attention to community stories in addition to emergent events on the professional knowledge landscape of the school in order to contextualize the educators' knowing. In both cases, the Yaeger and Hardy metaphors overflowed with site-based meaning that reflected the teachers' experiential knowledge of *living* reform. These live metaphors, I soon found out, fitted the teachers, the schools, the communities, and the educational situations extraordinarily well—so much so that I decided to telescopically and microscopically unravel the webs of narrative sense they combined using the metaphors not only as exemplars (Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002) to illustrate teachers' knowledge refined in action over time, but also as touch points of discussion, and the unifying theme to bind Part I, Part II, and the Conclusion of this "storied lives, storied landscapes, storied metaphors" volume together.

NOTE

1. John MacMurray (1961/1991) describes heterocentric in the manner I intend: "To act rightly is . . . to act for the sake of the Other . . ." (p. 122).

PART II

CHAPTER 7

EAGLE HIGH SCHOOL

A Case of "The Dragon in School Backyards"

In Part I, teachers' experiences of reform lodged within stories of school and stories of reform at T. P. Yaeger Middle School and Hardy Academy were presented, analyzed, and synthesized using metaphors the teachers naturally selected to characterize events that transpired on their professional knowledge landscapes. In Part II, the focus of attention turns to principals and their metaphorical accounts embodied in persons and embedded in context. In Chapter 7, the main character is Henry Richards; the campus, Eagle High School, located a few miles away from Hardy Academy. Chapter 7's narrative is followed by a reflective coda in Chapter 8.

GETTING ORIENTED

> When you work in a school and there is a dragon in your backyard, you had better prepare for the dragon. The dragon, of course, is the accountability system....

The above passage excerpted from a story that surfaced and resurfaced in different ways in three years of field notes offers a brief introduction to how Henry Richards, Principal of Eagle High School, a diverse, high poverty campus with approximately 2,200 students and 140 faculty members, made sense of mandated testing for accountability purposes. In his discussions with the Eagle

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faculty, in reform movement meetings, and in passing conversations and interviews, Henry Richards consistently reinforced this point. Although the introduction to Henry's dragon story sometimes changed—for example, use of the word "neighborhood" instead of "backyard"—the moral of his tale remained the same. Schools—and Eagle High School in particular—need to appease the dragon or face the consequences when it rears its fire-breathing head.

As a researcher engaged in a longitudinal inquiry at Eagle, I became attracted to Richards' dragon plot line and how it tacitly shaped his knowledge and practices, as well as the knowledge and practices of teachers in the school where he was the principal. I wanted to explore the connections between Henry's mythological dragon, standardization, and school context. My interest was not in the accountability system per se, but in how educators make sense of it and how it, in turn, influenced a school milieu and the contextualized knowledge that educators within it held and expressed. From the moment the narrative thread emerged in my field and research notes, I recognized the need to manage my subjectivity (Peshkin, 1986) with respect to testing and accountability. Only by suspending judgment would I remain open to where the inquiry might lead. Only by staying close to the educators' experiences would my investigation be narrative research as opposed to a thinly disguised personal opinion piece. Only by moving discretely on the landscape would the educators' knowledge become revealed in their terms.

From the outset, I understood that Henry Richards' selected language resonated with his personal experiences of mandated testing (Polkinghorne, 1988). Again, I was cognizant of the power of metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999) and myths (Campbell, 1972) that people live by. From the T.P. Yaeger Middle School and Hardy Academy inquiries, I furthermore knew that if I carefully connected the dragon story with the idea of accountability I would begin to unlock the Eagle High School experience of state-mandated testing for accountability purposes. Narratively exploring the dragon story would not only reveal the fine-grained, situated knowledge of an individual such as Henry; it would also illustrate the influence that the mandated accountability system had on the unfolding story of Eagle High School. The fact that the dragon narrative became linked with the mandated accountability system, for example, resulted from Henry Richards' filtering his experiences of compulsory testing through his personal practical knowledge constructed and reconstructed over time (Olson & Craig, 2001). Since mandated testing for accountability purposes is part of what educators come to know in their everyday practices, the topic automatically becomes considered either reflectively or non-reflectively in their thinking. In Henry Richards' case, the mandated accountability system was carefully deliberated and his reflective analysis was ritualistically shared with others in a deceptively simple, though powerfully strong, manner. In this way, Henry's knowledge became public—known to himself *and* by those around him.

INTRODUCING THE PRINCIPAL OF EAGLE HIGH SCHOOL

Born and raised in a northern state, Henry Richards graduated from a college in Nebraska. He first visited the southern state that would later become his home when his parents transferred to the locale from New York. Like his parents, he "fell in love with the place." Ironically, Henry's family settled in the immediate neighborhood served by Eagle High School. As a result, he was able to watch the campus as it was built "from the iron girds all the way up to the finished product." Richards, at that time in his life, did not know he would become a principal of the school.

In 1970, Henry began to teach history and coach basketball in a high school in the same school district as Eagle. Already accepted into law school, Henry's intention was to earn tuition by teaching for a short period of time. As Richards put it, he "got into teaching, really enjoyed it, and decided not to pursue a law career." Teaching, it seems, had wormed its way into his being. Teaching no longer was a job for Henry—it had become his profession, his identity, his life's work.

After instructing at the high school level for two years, Henry transferred to a junior high campus where he became head basketball and football coach and taught history and social studies. Then he returned to the high school campus where he taught government and history and coached football and basketball, eventually becoming assistant principal of the school, a position he held for seven years. Richards additionally filled executive positions in the principals' association for five years (1982–1987) and was appointed principal of a middle school campus in the same district in 1981. When a superintendent change took place in 1986, Henry Richards became Principal of Eagle High School for thirteen years.

INTRODUCING THE STATE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

For nearly a decade, the state accountability system has rated individual schools such as Eagle according to the following categories: exemplary—at least 90% of the students tested pass with individual scores at or above 70% and 1% or fewer students drop out of school in grades 7–12; recognized—80% to 89% of the students tested pass with individual scores at or above 70% and 1.1% to 3% of the students drop out of school in grades 7–12; acceptable—50% to 79% of the students tested pass with individual scores at or above 70% and 3.1% to 5.5% of the students drop out of school in grades 7–12; low performing—less than 50% of the students tested pass with individual scores at or above 70% and more than 5.5% of the students drop out of school in grades 7–12.

Required state reading and mathematics tests are administered to students in grades three through eight and in the tenth grade. Writing is also tested in the fourth, eighth, and tenth grades. The tests are criterion-referenced student achievement measures aligned with the state's mandated curriculum content which take into account variance across all demographic subgroups (African American, Hispanic, White, Economically Disadvantaged). The validity of the tests rests on the fact that the content measured is required to be taught to all students in all sub-population groups.[1]

INTRODUCING THE REFORM MOVEMENT

An East Coast philanthropist donated an unprecedented sum of money to improve public education throughout the United States. The funds subsequently were awarded to mostly urban sites on the condition that matching money would be raised locally. Eagle High School, like T. P. Yaeger Middle School, Hardy Academy, and Destiny High School, became one of eleven lead schools associated with one of the urban centers tied to the national organization. The purpose of the reform movement was to enhance student learning through teacher professional development, personalizing the learning environment, and breaking down isolation between people, schools, and the community.

THE STORY CONSTELLATION

The Story of Eagle High School

A brief sketch of the story of Eagle High School is one of a traditional, comprehensive school that was built in 1972 to serve grades 7–12 students, in a predominantly white, suburban golf course community. From its inception, Eagle was meant to be an academic school and has maintained a level of academic excellence since that time.

Although this smoothing narrative (Spence, 1986) relays a version of Eagle's story, it does not provide a full picture. To examine more closely the subtle nuances of the school landscape, an Eagle High School story, derived from a composite of many educators' narratives, will be shared in five parts with Henry Richards' personal dragon story—the narrative that interrupted the flow of Eagle's school story during his tenure—sandwiched in between.

Shift in Eagle's School Story: Golf Course Community

According to a longtime community resident, Eagle High School was built as a concession to the developer who planned the neighborhood. Although a district high school existed only a few miles away, the two schools were meant to serve different communities. Eagle would attract the primarily white, upwardly mobile population living in the vicinity of the golf course. Black students who lived nearby mostly would attend the other high school located in the Hardy neighborhood, a historical African American community. Given this background, students in the vicinity were zoned to two different high schools when Eagle High School was under construction: the high school in the African American neighborhood if you were black and another district high school if you were white. Some white families additionally chose to bus their children to a second white campus while Eagle was being built.

Shift in Eagle's School Story: Desegregation Years

The prevailing theory of action (Schön & McDonald, 1998) that mirrored dominant society's sentiments was enacted without serious opposition until 1977 in the particular mid-southern state. In 1977, however, the Department of Justice stepped in and ruled that the school district had failed "to desegregate properly." The court order called for the busing of African American students to predominantly white schools. It also brought about the closure of the historical black campus as a comprehensive high school and led to the redistribution of its student population to four other high schools, one of which was Eagle. This event, along with the changes that occurred in Eagle's immediate neighborhood, significantly altered the historical trajectory on which the school district, Eagle High School, and the golf course community appeared to be headed.

Shift in Eagle's School Story: Integration Years

Eagle's social narrative history was not only shaped by desegregation policies, it also was influenced by rapid economic change and urbanization. A passage from the Eagle High School Portfolio begins to paint the picture:

> The bust in the oil economy in the mid-1980s hit the community around Eagle particularly hard. Many families, who bought executive homes during the boom in the 1970s and early 1980s, lost their jobs. Unable to make pay-

> ments, they simply walked away, abandoning homes to foreclosure sales. (Eagle High School, 1999–2000)

The 1977 desegregation order coupled with the economic downturn which then became combined with the significant increase in the building of apartments in the Eagle neighborhood, many subsidized by the government, contributed to a major shift in demographics both for the golf course community and the school. As a result, the relatively small grades 7–12 school that had been designed to meet the needs of a more privileged, primarily one-race population, ended up doubling in size, being renovated three times, and becoming an exceedingly large school with a culturally, ethnically, and economically diverse population (Eagle High School, 1998–1999, pp. 1–3). The following chart, excerpted from Eagle's 1999–2000 school portfolio (pp. 1–5), succinctly captures the enormous transition that took place.

	1976–1977	*1986–1987*	*1999–2000*
Number of Students	1,242	2,150	2,211
Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students	7%	21%	42.4%
Ethnic Composition of Student Body			
White	80%	48%	10%
Black	17%	31%	55%
Hispanic	3%	12%	28%
Asian		9%	7%

The first two principals served their terms at Eagle High School from 1972 to 1986. In the first principal's tenure, Eagle began to live the story of academic excellence it had been given. Under the second principal's leadership, the story continued to be lived, although the 1977 desegregation order had been issued and Eagle's landscape had begun its dramatic transition from a majority white to a majority minority composition,[2] an unimagined trend that swept the school district.

A new story of separation began to emerge, one that subtly altered the relationship between race and social class. Upper middle-class African American families, for example, became residents in the golf course portion of Eagle's backyard whereas some lower-class African American families, whose children were bused to the campus, lived desegregation stories within Eagle's school context but not in home communities like Hardy.

When Henry Richards became Principal of Eagle High School in 1986, he was, in his own words,

> . . . charged to manage the transition in a very positive manner. There were two expectations at that time . . . (1) maintain the academic excellence that Eagle High School had . . . (2) make the transition as smooth as possible.

This mandate resonated with the Justice Department order that had been handed down. From the school district's perspective, it was imperative that racially diverse students attend the formerly white school, and the academic excellence for which the campus had been known be upheld regardless of ethnic and socioeconomic shifts. Stated differently, Eagle was to remain of the same educational quality although "the youth appearing on its doorstep were vastly different."

In an interview, Richards reflected on his first impressions and the changes he personally witnessed in over a decade:

> By the time I came here, thirteen years after Eagle was originally built, the school was growing tremendously. And the growth was changing ethnically and culturally . . . . It was changing overnight almost. It went from 1,300 students to 1,800 way up to 3,104 [in 1996–1997] and 3,018 [in 1997–1998]. . .

He continued:

> And a lot of people called it 'white flight,' and I guess that is an appropriate sociological term. For whatever reasons, people left. The houses were very reasonably priced and so middle-class people of different races moved into the school. But there was, at the same time, a tremendous growth of apartments . . . that tends, after a time, to become housing for the less economically advantaged. That certainly took place here at Eagle High School . . . It was a textbook case.

When Richards was first appointed Principal of Eagle High School, he began to take an active role in assisting families and the surrounding neighborhoods with the transition. With parents and community members, Henry held focus group sessions to share stories of where the school had been, where it was, and where people would like to see it going. Richards remembered:

> . . . calling people in and having focus groups. There would be coffee or lunch with the principal. And it was [a] very ethnically and culturally diverse group. I would bring in people from the country club crowd, from the historical black community, and some business representatives. They were very honest; they were not afraid to hold back. Then I went out into the community . . . visited churches, civic organizations, businesses, schools . . .

In this way, the principal of Eagle High School helped improve adult communication and heighten community awareness of the ongoing changes.

What was left for Richards to do was to communicate with the teachers and students. His work began with the teachers:

> Then I brought the teachers in. I listened hard to the teachers. I found a group of teachers that were like-minded. They really knew that we were in a state of flux ... either Eagle High School was going to maintain its educational excellence or it was going to flounder and die ... like so many urban schools do ... I mean, I do not think it is solely the function of the principal, but I do think the principal's responsibility is to gather the forces to make certain positive things happen.

Under the direction of the longtime social studies department head, a mission statement was crafted to guide the educational plot lines available to youth at Eagle High School from that point onward. As Richards explained,

> ... community people, parents, teachers, and students were involved [in its creation]. And we set out to work ... with an ethnically and culturally diverse group, representing all walks of life because we wanted the mission to reflect the community ... We worked on that statement for six months ... And we came back to the school as well and talked among ourselves ... where we had been, what we had accomplished, and what we wanted to do. We came up with the mission statement that has been our guiding force since 1987.

The shared mission statement, outlined below, firmly bonded the faculty together:

> We, the members of the Eagle Senior High School Community, are committed to enriching the lives of all whom we touch. We will accomplish this goal by maintaining academic excellence, examining and sharing positive values, affirming dignity in diversity, promoting social development, and serving as a community resource.

This mission (along with two other statements that were later added: "First Things First" in 1995–1996 and "Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing," in 1996–1997) ceremoniously was hung with photographs and sculptures of the American eagle in the school's front entrance. The symbols were to remind everyone of Eagle High School's strength of purpose and its deep commitment to teaching and learning.

The critical piece left for Richards to work on was the engagement of Eagle students. In the deliberations, all participants realized that parents, teachers, and the community would influence students' perceptions and attitudes. However, another major force could deeply affect students' reactions to the racial and socioeconomic aspect change: the school context. According to many faculty and community members, this part of the transition was the one in which Henry Richards particularly shone. Rather than suppressing student activism, he took steps to make certain that the conditions that give rise to racial and socioeconomic dissension did not fester. As one longtime teacher emphatically stated, Richards "chose the righteous way" to deal with the social turmoil of the time and set a positive tone for the school landscape for years to come. Closely following the mission statement, he built up "an affirmed diversity" at Eagle High School rather than stifling differences and activism. An intense effort was made to ensure that the school became racially "inclusive, not exclusive in all areas" from "Advanced Placement and Honors classes to the drill team and cheerleading squad." As Henry put it, the school became "stripped of all the remaining vestiges of the previous white majority," making it possible for all youth to assume student council positions, the class valedictorian role, and to take advantage of a multitude of other leadership opportunities the campus offered. As a result, Eagle did not experience newspaper headline incidents typically associated with urban schools undergoing unplanned social and economic dislocation.

With these changes underway, the revised path Eagle High School would pursue appeared to be established. Drawing on Eagle's existing reputation and the fact the school district's attention and efforts necessarily were directed to campuses of greater need (another court intervention came in 1995, as readers will recall), the rapidly transitioning Eagle High School would largely operate as, what lightheartedly was termed, "Eagle Independent School District." Henry Richards outwardly would field district office concerns while inwardly his team of highly capable teachers would deal with "the growing percentage of [youth] coming through Eagle's doors drained by life circumstances." As one teacher explained,

> Henry totally trusted in the professionalism of his teachers. He had faith in us. He would never make us do anything perfunctory. He believed we knew best how to teach the children before us. He saw us as possessing very special knowledge of curriculum ... Henry put a circle of protection around us so we could work with students.

Being a comprehensive campus, the teachers at Eagle High School were organized according to a strong department structure. Through participation in Coalition of Essential Schools meetings and other national conferences, the Eagle teachers became acquainted with the notion of smaller families of teachers and students, the "less is more" curricular approach, as well as other innovative ideas. The former approach, introduced to the campus in 1993–1994, worked "until a change in state regulation interfered with its success" and the latter notion greatly influenced how pedagogy was envisioned at the school.

The concepts of rigor and relevancy additionally were important to Eagle's faculty. For example, much thought was put into what content would be most meaningful to students enrolled in the African history class offered as part of the regular school program. Also, in government class, activities relating to the census focused on issues concerning how and when Hispanics emerged as a separate category, how the nature of the Asian American classification changed, and how the 33% of citizens living below the poverty line in the state included a substantial number of children and youth as well as adults identified as "the working poor," some who held two or more jobs.

Henry Richards' most notable administrative improvement to Eagle High School came in 1994–1995 when he merged the roles of assistant principals and counselors in the life of the school. This change meant that educators in the newly combined leadership/support positions would interact with fewer individuals in greater depth. This restorying of positions enabled Eagle students and teachers to become better known and nurtured in the large, comprehensive high school environment.

During this period of great transformation, Eagle High School received many honors from out-of-school places that found the school's transitional narrative compelling and worthy of recognition. Two years after the school's mission was developed (1989), the U.S. Department of Education named Eagle High School a Blue Ribbon Nationally Recognized School of Excellence. In 1992, *Redbook* acknowledged Eagle High School as one of the top 42 schools in the nation. The school also received the Governor's Award for Significant Gains in accountability system test scores in 1995 and again in 1998.[3] As mentioned earlier, Eagle High School was the only comprehensive high school in the urban area to be chosen as a lead campus in 1997 by the local office of a national reform movement.

I now turn to Henry Richards' dragon narrative that interrupted the course of Eagle's social narrative history and altered Henry's personal story as a principal. The Eagle High School narrative then continues with two additional sections: Organized School Reform and Aftermath of the State Accountability System.

HENRY RICHARDS' DRAGON STORY

> When you live in a neighborhood, and there's a dragon in that neighborhood, you had better prepare for the dragon ... so we prepare for it ... the one system of accountability. What Eagle High School is engaged in now is another system [of accountability]. The first method is 'daily drip' but what we are doing is a much more honest and ethical way than simply teaching to the test ... It will take us a little longer ... but we honor the curriculum in

> our classes. We are dealing with the two accountability systems jointly as opposed to separately. And it will take us a little bit longer to get there . . .

When Henry Richards typically reflected on testing for accountability purposes, he storied not one, but two dragons in Eagle's backyard. The first dragon is the one given to the school by state policymakers, elected representatives of the public; the second dragon is chosen by the educators and reinforced through the school's mission statement and the school's association with organized school reform movements. The first dragon is "daily drip," meaning it hangs like a prescribed intravenous bag attached to school programs, making testing/practice testing a central part of curriculum, consuming a minimum of six weeks of instructional time. In this scenario, the curricular experiences to which youth legally are entitled may become crowded out as testing and "what people do in service of testing/practice testing" overtakes learning as "the main thing." And when student learning becomes subservient to testing, curriculum, in turn, becomes bounded by what is testable, instruction wrapped around "bubble in" worksheets, and human worth (that of teachers, students, and institutions) determined by the rankings and ratings produced in the accountability marketplace. And some things fall in perilous danger of becoming lost altogether: the arts and other non-tested subject areas, dialogue about critical issues, and vital human interactions necessary for sustaining the life of the mind and human development in community.

The second dragon, as Richards saw it, takes a more authentic approach. It "respects" the curriculum and does not allow the accountability process to drive the instruction available to youth nor to eat up increasing amounts of instructional time. It opens up horizons of knowing by exposing students to higher order thinking skills, causing them to engage in deep philosophical discussions and to use knowledge in practical situations. It is a product and a process within the instructional loop, but does not consume or subsume instruction. It expands the possibilities of the mind rather than narrowing focus and the opportunities and experiences to which students are introduced.

Henry situated his knowledge of the first dragon in the history of educational change of which he was well versed. His narrative continued:

> The problem is that we have never learned how to fail intelligently in education . . . we never . . . have figured out why students or innovations failed. We just say it didn't work; students didn't learn. And it is kind of like getting on a horse and the horse dies. What do we do to education? We just get a bigger whip or we make the dead horse run a shorter race or something like that. I mean we never get off that horse.

In this excerpt, Richards explores the concept of failure and the problem of not being able to find meaning in it. He tells of how the field of education generally does not pay heed to why students do not learn but instead seeks to find new forms of motivation/coercion that justify continuation of conventional practices.

The use of test-related incentives aptly illustrates Henry's point. What innocently begins as pencils or erasers given to children, becomes pizza parties or dances sponsored for teenagers, becomes a few hundred dollar bonus given teachers, a few thousand dollar bonus offered principals, and several thousand dollar bonuses awarded superintendents, depending on the pretest bargains struck. And when the schools built around incentives falter in the posttest period, blaming predictably occurs down the line as those most powerful hold those least powerful responsible for results. Then better incentives (bicycle contests for children, increased monetary rewards for adults, the purchase of revised versions of test preparation materials to improve curriculum, the hiring of new motivational speakers to help students and educators "beat the test") are sought rather than enlarged understandings of the sources of failure. In this way, core problems of grave concern to the public at large are neither recognized nor rectified. Only the scores—not the underlying conditions and perplexing circumstances within which they were produced—are taken into account. Hence, the general population becomes exceedingly comfortable with detached results, increasingly complacent about what they mean. "More testing" becomes the public panacea for deep-seated problems. Rigorous inquiry into personal and collective human experience and underlying school and societal conditions is neither asked for nor undertaken.

Richards also introduced the notion of "the shorter race" in his interpretation of educational history. Given that a root definition of curriculum is "the course that is run," one could take this to mean a shorter, less rigorous curriculum. Some have referred to such a course of study as one that has been "watered down" or "dumbed down," ideas that Richards, by virtue of his comment, finds repulsive, unconscionable. Henry clearly rejects cheap facsimiles of quality professional development and curriculum that tend to accompany the accountability system dragon as educators frantically scramble to find inventive, often sadly contrived, ways to satiate its demands.

Henry's second dragon, of course, is the dragon with which humans more easily relate. For Richards, this dragon represents new ways of thinking about evaluation that fit with new methods of teaching and instruction. In meetings associated with the organized reform movement, for example, Henry insisted that changes in curriculum, instruction, and evaluation practices go hand in hand. To Richards, school reform automatically "implies that evaluation will be done differently." Like Eisner (2001, p. 367), Henry believed that curriculum and instruction should not be restricted by "the limitations of evaluation technology." In other words, the magnitude of what teachers and students know and are able to do should not be confined to what can be measured and judged according to prevailing systems. To Richards, the onus resides with reform agencies and their representatives to make certain that evaluation repertoires become stretched to include broader, more expansive forms of accounting for the human experience of change. To his way of thinking, existing theory-practice hegemonies should not be reinforced by academician's evaluation practices. If these changes do not happen, educators and schools will not have the fundamental support they need to engage in reform in ways that are meaningful and valuable to their students and themselves nor will the public be introduced to new assessment and evaluation stories to live by.

Not only did Richards acknowledge the presence of two accountability systems at Eagle High School, he also understood that educators needed to feed both monsters in order to keep them satisfied. He explained:

> And we not only have things to do for one accountability system we have things to do for two accountability systems.... And some people see them as being in conflict. Personally, I do not experience the conflict ... and I will tell you why ... the first question I am always asked when I'm out is: What are Eagle's test scores? That's the first question I am always asked ... it is very clear what the public wants and that is test scores. And I mean, who does not want kids that can read critically, write persuasively, do mathematics? I mean, we all want that ... Who can argue with it? So we have to do things. And quite frankly we have been getting kids—and we are not going to blame them—that are not prepared. So we have to get them prepared to take the test and do well on it.

In this passage, Henry accepts the presence of the standardized testing dragon and does not see it running counter to Eagle's preferred dragon. In fact, Richards expresses healthy respect for the public's focus on testing. While he recognizes that school-based educators and researchers can and should find alternatives such as Goodlad's (1998) ideas about school satisfaction, the Coalition of Essential School's notion of graduation by exhibition (Sizer, 1992), and school portfolio development from a teacher knowledge perspective (Craig, 2002a), he also believes, following Davis, Jr. (2000), that policy decisions reside with members of the public at large rather than falling in the exclusive domain of school and/or university-based educators.

Yet, within this thinking, Henry is well aware of an unavoidable dilemma: What happens when the public favors one approach, and students and schools, for whatever reason, cannot 'measure up'? In such situations, Henry Richards recognizes that educators may feel forced to do *things* they know better not to do, practices they would otherwise reject, if it were not for the pressures associated with testing. These compensatory *things* are the less authentic, less ethical, less professional, less pedagogically sound practices to which Henry alluded earlier. Slippage creeps in in many forms: questionable labeling and grouping strategies, mass treatments and interventions, and the exertion of psychological pressure (i.e., shunning, bullying, scapegoating) to bring about student, teacher, and administrator compliance. And in an extreme case in another school district, educators were accused of altering students' test answers to inflate student and school ratings, thus avoiding the stigma attached to a tough educational situation of enduring challenge.

That Richards chooses the word *things* to describe a wide array of desperate acts is telling. *Things* are what educators resort to when youth cannot show that they know via conventional means. *Things* signal the presence of the greedy dragon in western mythology, the dragon whose demands justify its fabled existence, secure its position of prominence, and elicit the fear and admiration of politicians, educators, and the public alike. *Things* represent a dragon with the potential to "suck out of you its life" (Andrews, 1998, p. 184).

Continuing his dragon story, Henry Richards discussed Eagle's progress with respect to the prevailing accountability system:

> Eagle High School does well [in the mandated accountability system]. I mean, we do okay. I am not pleased, but I am, you know, somewhat satisfied. We are, you know, working hard on teaching the curriculum to increase the test scores . . .

In this excerpt, Henry's assessment is that Eagle does "okay," but that room for improvement exists. While Eagle's scores exceed those of like campuses (i.e., large, urban, diverse, high poverty schools), Richards recognizes that Eagle's test data is not at or above the state mean. At the same time, if Goodlad's ideas about school satisfaction were applied to Eagle High School, the campus—that visitors typically portray as "distinctly calmer, cleaner, more positively upbeat than other schools. . ."—would fare remarkably well. Eagle, in Goodlad's terms, would be recognized for its mindful attentiveness to "school culture," its way of "taking care of business," its wide range of "positive human connections," and its attempts to connect with "homes and parents in positive ways." Furthermore, it most probably would be praised for its attentiveness to external standards "by developing an internal sense of its educational role. . ." and judged as "a good school in virtually all respects" (Goodlad, 1998, pp. 212–214). After all, criteria similar to those advanced by Goodlad, along with positive trend lines in standardized test scores over time, most likely were considered when the reform movement and other agencies honored Eagle as a promising reforming campus.

Knowing that Eagle needs to continue to improve, Henry Richards realizes the central way to do so is through thoughtful, purposeful curriculum; that is, curriculum which is "rigorous, culturally relevant, and attentive to students' needs." To Henry's way of thinking, a sustained focus on curriculum and instruction will lead to academic growth on the part of students, enhanced professionalism on the part of teachers, and incremental change with respect to standardized test scores. These three phenomena, however, struggle to coexist with the "daily drip" method because that approach demands that teachers repeatedly administer the same antidote—more and better versions of test preparation—to students. In test preparation situations, neither teachers' nor students' prior knowledge is taken into account. Hence, over time, testing/testing-taking addictions set in rather than the development of a robust relationship between and among curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Scores related to testing rather than the human learning they represent take front and center stage. The accountability icon—not human growth and what it enables students to know, do, and be—becomes valued most.

Although Richards denies that the two dragons in Eagle's backyard are irreconcilably different, he does admit that a potential showdown between the monsters sits in the offing. A battle would ensue if Eagle did not comply with the demands of the first accountability dragon while nurturing the second one. Henry Richards explained:

> ... One part of the conflict is that we are going to have to deal with the school's test scores. The other part of the conflict is we have some reforms we want to do, and they involve application of knowledge rather than accumulation of knowledge .... We want our curriculum to be full-bodied, deeply textured, rich, relevant....

SHIFT IN EAGLE'S SCHOOL STORY: ORGANIZED SCHOOL REFORM

In its 1997–1998 funding proposal submitted to the reform movement, Eagle High School requested time for teachers to plan, reflect, and collaborate in order to enhance students' curricular experiences. The proposal continued Eagle's Project SOAR plot line. Begun in 1989, Project SOAR was a strategic plot line that formed Eagle's individually tailored response to *A Nation At Risk* (NCEE, 1983). Focused on student outcomes, achievement, and results (SOAR), its intent was to improve Eagle High School's curriculum, instruction, and organization.

Where the new iteration of Project SOAR—the new story of reform—was concerned, Year 1 (1997–1998) would focus on program planning, Year 2 (1998–1999) on professional development, Year 3 (1999–2000) on full program "implementation," Year 4 (2000–2001) on increased student involvement and asking "tough questions," and Year 5 (2001–2002) on sustaining the teacher-authored reforms through new partnerships and additional student input into the identification of changes that needed to be made (Eagle High School, 2001–2002). Funds would be directed annually toward the establishment and continuation of: (1) Advanced-Placement teacher professional development, (2) the creation of teacher and student Critical Friends Groups (Cushman, 1999), (3) the Camp SOAR summer day program targeting under-served 8–11 year olds in the surrounding communities (including Hardy) and staffed by Eagle High School student counselors, (4) three teacher professional development academies (International Studies, Career Connections, and Cyber Corps), (5) a technology center made available to students and their parents in after school hours, (6) Anti-Defamation League[4] teacher professional development, (7) the creation of advisory groups so that all students would have the opportunity to interact in small communities throughout their high school years, (8) the support of student graduation-by-exhibition projects, (9) the creation of a reflective school portfolio documenting Eagle's experience of school reform from teachers' perspectives, and (10) a campus-created summer institute to nurture teacher participation and dialogue (Eagle High School, 2001–2002).

In its first year of reform movement funding (1997–1998), Eagle High School wrestled with its intended story of reform because its initial professional development approach mirrored the school district's teacher training method, the only model the teachers had ever experienced. Eagle's teachers quickly learned that what they instituted of their own accord had resulted in change without progress.

Then a team of teachers from Eagle, in the company of Henry Richards and Angela Hernández, the administrator responsible for curriculum, experienced "a real epiphany" at a local summer institute in 1998. The team engaged in a professional development activity in which they connected Eagle's school mission with the imperatives of the reform movement and more importantly, anchored them in their personal beliefs and practices. A lead teacher described the process in which the Eagle educators engaged:

> We took our mission statement and we said, okay, what current programs go under each element of the mission statement, and can we reflect, collaborate, and come up with an espoused theory that will unify everything . . . And it was just like a light bulb. For the very first time, we saw . . . we were going

> some place [with the story of reform] . . . that things fit together . . . We teachers had . . . never had time nor had been challenged to articulate what we were doing. That institute gave us the challenge and the time to focus, to sit down, reflect, to collaborate, to say, "This is what we are doing."

The team then returned to Eagle High School and decided to take a similar approach to professional development with the remaining one hundred thirty faculty members.

> . . . Right before school started we had a three-day institute. We teachers were responsible for the whole thing. Our principal completely stepped out. We developed it and it was the most emotional thing I have ever participated in . . . Everyone kept saying: "I never knew that teachers could be so supportive of one another. I never understood where we were going [with the reform movement]. But we physically acted out what we were doing. We *were* the pieces." It took a great deal of thought.

The result was that the 1998–1999 school year at Eagle High School began in a highly invigorating, collaborative way. The teacher-generated professional development activities that involved role-playing and intense discussion of the different elements of the mission statement reaffirmed the school's story by connecting it in powerful ways to the imperatives of the reform movement, a development that delighted Henry Richards. The enthusiasm and commitment exhibited by the faculty prompted Richards to proudly remark on more than one occasion that the school was "putting things together" in very productive ways that would make Eagle a recognized campus—according to the existing accountability system ratings—in the very near future.

With the reform movement association, Eagle High School also was awarded significant funds to enable teachers to participate in new kinds of professional development, to travel to other schools and conferences, and to experiment with new ideas. The intent was to help teachers better connect with, and respond to, the increasing number of resistant learners at the school. The desire was to build Eagle's learning community through reflection and collaboration. The purpose was to make high quality curricular experiences available to more students.

Everything appeared to unfold according to Year 1 and Year 2 of the detailed reform plans until the school's 1999 standardized test results were released.[5] What an unimagined surprise of colossal proportion they presented!

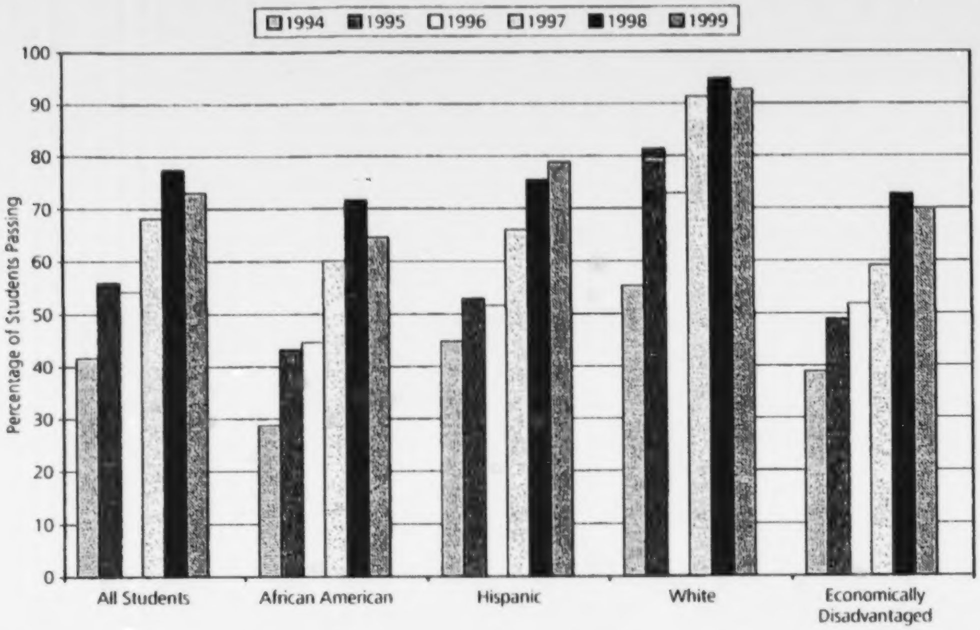

Figure 7.1. How do Eagle students perform on state-mandated standardized tests administered annually? (Mathematics)

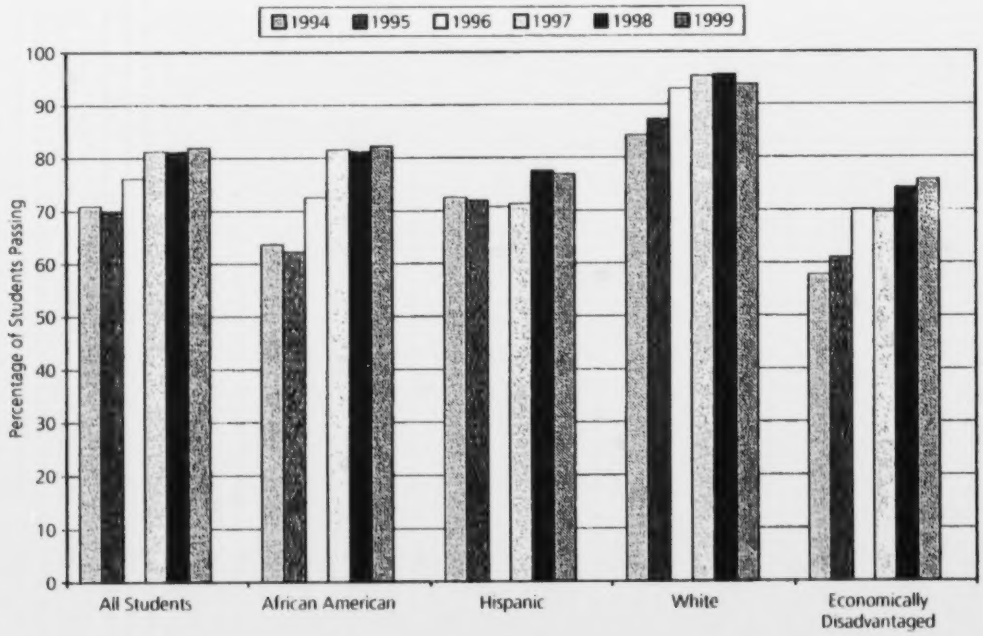

Figure 7.2. How do Eagle students perform on state-mandated standardized tests administered annually? (Reading)

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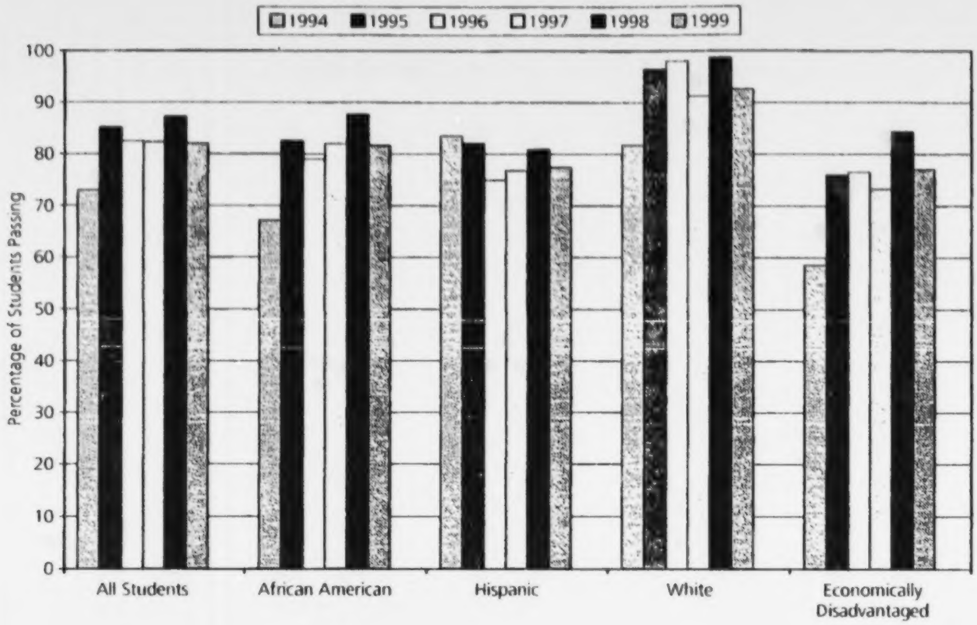

Figure 7.3. How do Eagle students perform on state-mandated standardized tests administered annually? (Writing)

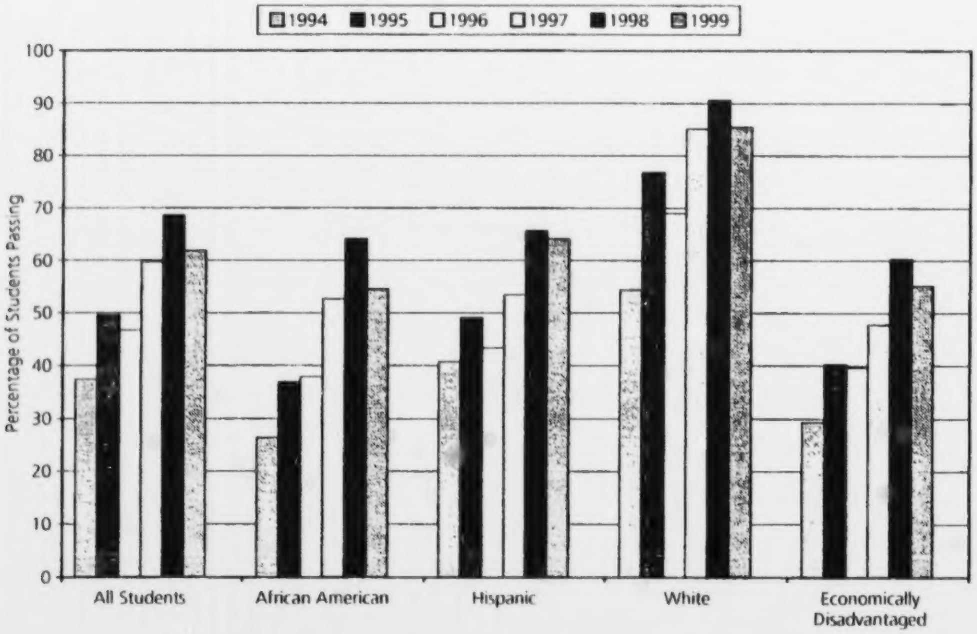

Figure 7.4. How do Eagle students perform on state-mandated standardized tests administered annually? (All Tests Taken)

Shock waves reverberated throughout the building when it was discovered that Eagle's mathematics and writing scores had not steadily increased, but had, in fact, decreased, albeit by statistically insignificant numbers. The percentage of all students and each subgroup of students (African American, Hispanic, White, and Economically Disadvantaged) who passed all tests, for example, declined by about 5% from 1998 to 1999. The unanticipated development immediately threw suspicion on the school's reform story when a source of blame characteristically was sought. The ill-timed incident tore at the hearts of deeply committed, community-minded teachers as the following excerpt illustrates:

> We received our scores today. We went down ... Poor [Angela, our Curriculum Leader] and poor Henry, our Principal. I could not help but cry—Is this one hurdle we cannot span? As a 10th grade teacher, I feel responsible. How do we shout reform is good when our poor kids flounder with standardized test scores? I am reading this edition of *Rethinking Schools*[6] that deals with [the issues of] standardized testing ... But we still have to deal with the fact that the test is very real and somewhat controls our lives ...

The same teacher went on to share an analogy she borrowed from a 1970s Beach Boys soundtrack that captured her up-close experience of change and her personal practical knowledge of the intractable dilemma concerning the academic achievement of high poverty, minority youth:

> I am in a fishbowl—swirling, swirling—gulping for air—searching for flashes of light—Our research group is treading in unknown waters—it is frightening, yet exhilarating. I think we have found the missing piece of our espoused theory (Schön & McDonald, 1998)—bringing in theory—It kind of matches the move we are making—The old theories etc., are safe like our house. In the dark, I can find my way around. I know where secret marks are on the wall noting my students' growth. Our espoused theory sort of pulls together the familiar. Then the venturing out ... The old does not fit our new knowledge snugly. So we begin to pull in those new concepts and ideas to form a new theory ... It seems to me that reflection and collaboration show the 'holes' in teaching practice ... [They are] the hole-pluggers ... Back to my house analogy, the fit in our old house is no longer snug—we search for a better one. This new house, though, represents the construction of a new framework. But it is scary ...

In these passages, the teacher graphically describes Eagle's inopportune state of affairs in the aftermath of its brush with the accountability system dragon. Once the dragon's news became known, the victory took wind, and scores were publicized, the teacher cried. She wept tears of sympathy for the people who staunchly defended teaching curriculum "as opposed to teaching testing" at Eagle High School over the continuum and through unprecedented periods of transition. She expressed overwhelming sadness for Angela Hernández, the curriculum administrator, Henry Richards, the principal, and teachers like herself. In her analogy, she poignantly discussed images of light and darkness and the sense of swirling around in unknown territory in a manner not unlike early explorers who wrote "Here Be Dragons" on maps to indicate "terra incognito."[7] The idea of the old and new not fitting together additionally emerged in her text. Also evident is knowledge that a new, useful framework has been discovered but with it comes terror because the better approach has not been authorized in the conventional top-down manner. And the teacher's major concern pertained to the dreaded overarching question: What will happen next?

SHIFT IN EAGLE'S SCHOOL STORY: POST-STATE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM ATTACK

After the head-on collision with the accountability system dragon, Henry Richards engaged the teachers on Eagle's school reform team in a candid discussion. He praised the strengthened relationships that had been cultivated with students and how teachers increasingly examined their practices in the company of one another. He spoke of the growth in support, collaboration, and trust he had witnessed on the campus. Henry added that the test scores were still in the process of "being disaggregated." However, it was clear that the campus' sharp population increase over two years, and subsequent decrease (3,018 to 2,240 students) in the previous school year, coupled with its acceptance of 140 predominantly at risk, minority students from outside the district boundaries in the current school year, had served to keep "more kids in school" but had "hurt us significantly." When the history department head who penned Eagle's mission statement, questioned the status of "our teacher driven reforms," Richards regrettably replied:

> A very prescriptive way is coming down the tubes ... The parameters have been well defined to me ... Our reform programs are under review ... The translation of smart teachers into smart students has not taken place in the manner expected.

Then, with deliberate reference to "the test score dragon," he emphasized: "We know it is not the be-all or end-all but its concerns have to be addressed." Henry concluded his comments by saying he was "very tired" and that sleep would continue to evade him until his ill-awaited appointment with district officials was over.

A few months later in the summer of 1999, Henry Richards tendered his resignation as Principal of Eagle High School. Tears flowed once again as the faculty mourned his departure. The professional knowledge landscape of Eagle High School remained stunned, numb, inert, for months to follow. Students and teachers alike waited for Henry Richards to stroll down the hall or pop his head around a corner. And Richards felt a sense of loss, too, in his new position at a comprehensive high school in a nearby city. However, the recent events soundly awakened him to the fact that it was time for him to start paying attention to his personal welfare rather than fending off dragons in Eagle's backyard. Henry Richards furthermore was desirous of making the point that Eagle's growth was not so much attached to the force of his personality—which was *considerable*—as it was connected to sound beliefs about teaching and learning. This hypothesis could neither be tested nor proven while he continued to play a lead role at Eagle. Besides, the focus he had worked relentlessly to establish on the professional knowledge landscape of Eagle High School had been taken away—but only outwardly, he knew, and only for the time being.

From his position at his new comprehensive high school a few dozen miles down the interstate highway, Henry Richards participated in Eagle affairs from the sidelines. He provided sage advice to his principal-replacement who was new-to-position and on term contract and strong encouragement to his colleagues at Eagle High School. Time and time again, he reemphasized that the school had put the building blocks in place. Repeatedly, he articulated his unshaken belief that Eagle High School would become a recognized campus according to the criteria set by the state. Over and over again, he reiterated his personal theory that it takes longer for schools that focus on quality curriculum to satisfy the mandated testing dragon. And in a cautionary fashion, he added that quick-fix approaches may bring about short-term gains but can, in the long run, stymie fruitful changes of more enduring effect and lasting value.

As Henry Richards predicted, Eagle overcame the statistically insignificant dip of 1999 in March 2000. In 2000, mathematics, writing, and reading scores at the school cumulatively increased by nearly 25% across the board (12.6% in all tests taken), making Eagle High School a recognized campus according to the official criteria of the state accountability system. At the same time, Eagle further closed the achievement gap (Williams, 1996) between subgroups, leading all of the other high schools in the majority minority school district in addressing the academic achievement of minority and disadvantaged student populations as defined by the state.

As Henry Richards emphasized when he first narrated his accountability story to live by, it would and will take Eagle longer. However, respecting curriculum—in spite of the twisty complications lodged in the mandated accountability system that tempt educators to do otherwise—is the honest, moral, and authentic way to go.

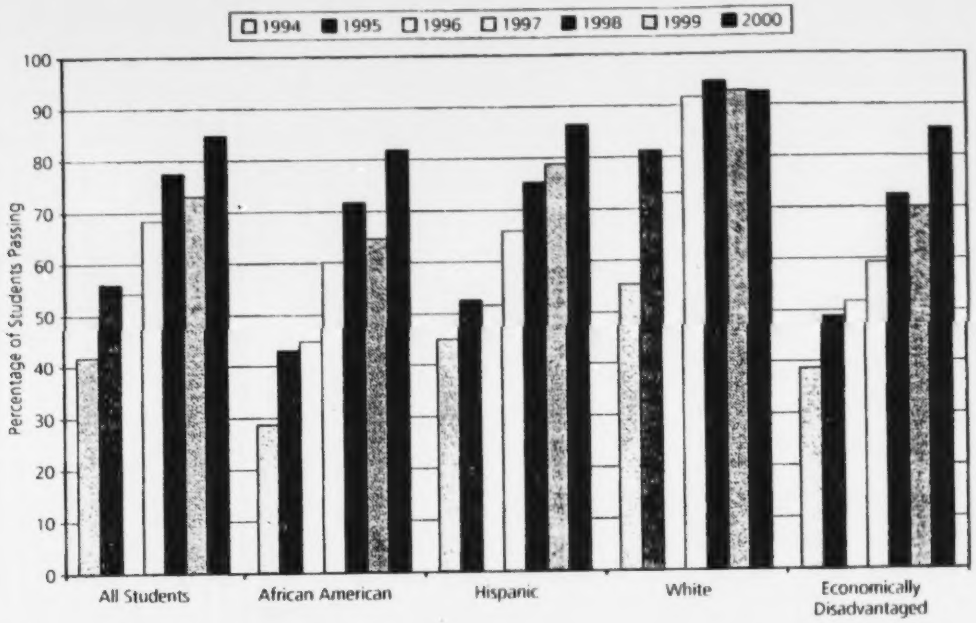

Figure 7.5. How do Eagle students perform on state-mandated standardized tests administered annually? (Mathematics)

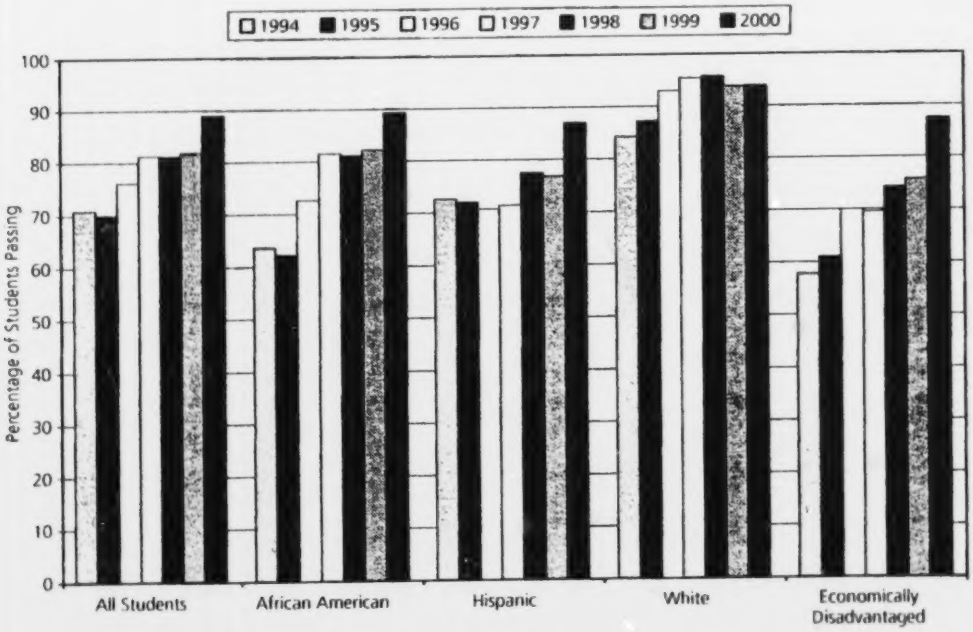

Figure 7.6. How do Eagle students perform on state-mandated standardized tests administered annually? (Reading)

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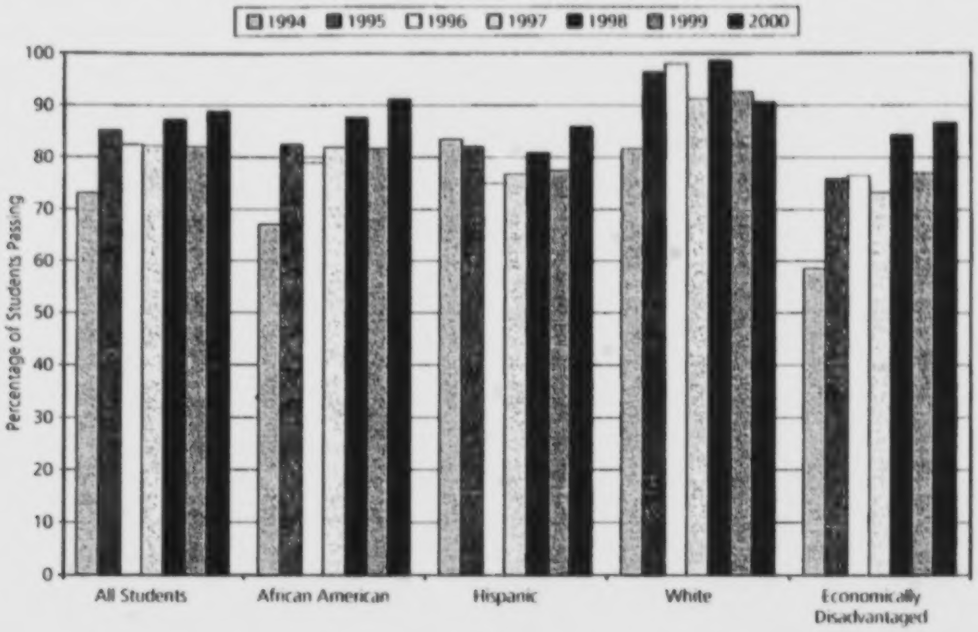

Figure 7.7. How do Eagle students perform on state-mandated standardized tests administered annually? (Writing)

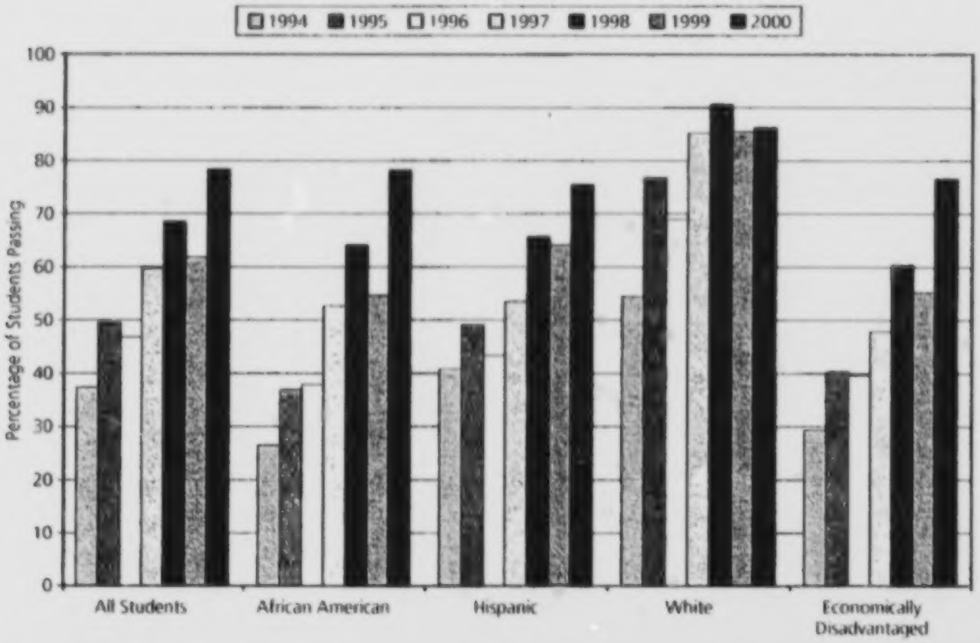

Figure 7.8. How do Eagle students perform on state-mandated standardized tests administered annually? (All Tests Taken)

NOTES

1. This information and a great deal more is readily available on the state website.
2. The word, majority, refers to quantity and means more than half the student population. The word, minority, on the other hand, pertains to the racial makeup of the student population and refers to students not categorized as white.
3. According to the Eagle educators, the awards were based on a combination of the school's dropout rate and sub-population group gains made by 10th grade students on the state-mandated criterion-referenced tests administered annually.
4. See http://www.adl.org
5. In the particular mid-southern state, scores over time for all schools are posted on a publicly accessible website. The scores reported here were obtained from that website and verified at the school level.
6. See http://www.rethinkingschools.org
7. See http://www.draconian.com/home/frameset.htm

CHAPTER 8

"THE DRAGON IN SCHOOL BACKYARDS"

A Reflective Coda

This reflective coda accompanies Chapter 7, Eagle High School: A Case of "The Dragon in School Backyards." It centers on Henry Richards' dragon metaphor and what it reveals about his and others' knowing of the state accountability system.

THE DRAGON METAPHOR

Henry Richards' choice of a dragon as a central creature in his story recounted in Chapter 7 is a particularly appropriate one for representing accountability systems and depicting the phenomena of change that is so prevalent in the tale he told and retold, lived and relived. Dragons have been with human beings since time immemorial and historically have represented opposing forces and the human desire to achieve balance (Campbell, 1949) between them. Accountability systems, like mythological dragons, are humanly constructed, but can become detached from human beings and can, in the extreme case, affect people, especially those least powerful, in inhuman ways (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Although the alternate accountability system Eagle High School works on takes many forms and remains close to the teachers and to Henry Richards, it also risks

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becoming detached, inhumane, out of hand. It, too, could take dangerous "flights from the field" (Schwab, 1969). The question arises as to how any renowned form of accountability can be kept in check to ensure that its built-in monster capabilities facilitate rather than stunt the teaching of curriculum. Is it the presence of alternate, competing stories that maintain the equilibrium or can mechanisms be built into existing systems to avoid excesses, inherent conservatism (Eisner, 1990), and the ugly underbelly of the testing experience that perpetually looms? Also, at what point do accountability systems become discarded like *Puff, The Magic Dragon* (Yarrow & Tipton, 1963), the 1960s dragon that, in its literal translation, became no longer relevant when the youth matured? Could curriculum and instruction potentially outgrow or at the very least temper the accountability fixation that dominates the educational terrain at the present time? These questions quickly rise to the fore as the dragon metaphor is considered.

THE DRAGON ENVIRONMENT

Richards' dragon metaphor also causes one to consider dragons in their natural environments: dragons with their heads poking out of caves or dragons with their bellies submersed in water. In both cases, part of the dragon is seen and part of the dragon is not seen. Similarly, part of the dragon is known and part of the dragon is unknown. This observation also is true of the influence of mandated testing on the professional knowledge landscape of schools and on the knowledge that teachers hold and express in context. Cover stories (Crites, 1979) necessarily may be told to veil truths about what people feel expected to do—and not to do—which are too shocking to be admitted.

The "dragon in school backyards" tale is full of stories within stories in which some truths remain submersed. For example, in 1999 when test scores went down and people grappled for an explanation, the unavoidable "implementation dip" story (Fullan, 1991), the belief that reforming schools inevitably will experience scores that decrease before they increase, was not told. Also not uttered was the even more plausible tale of a comprehensive American high school that had accommodated a population that burgeoned to the more than three thousand range of students while a 9th grade campus was constructed. And only peripherally mentioned were the more than one hundred students that transferred into Eagle from neighboring districts who otherwise would have been labeled school dropouts. Rather, the teacher-authored changes associated with the story of reform—the attempt to build improved approaches to teaching, learning, curriculum, and evaluation—were alleged to be the culprit. Thus, teachers, along with Henry Richards and Angela Hernández, became tagged with the "failure."

Also, the fire the mandated accountability system initially breathed carefully was reported, but the "prescriptive and descriptive things" that Henry Richards signaled would happen to teachers in tested subject areas occurred during the leadership transition. One teacher spoke of how "the things we [students and teachers] were required to do were not inspiring; it was like being visited by the plague." Another likened the experience to teachers' practices being placed "under siege." Yet another articulated the demands to teach phonics, use worksheets, follow scripted lesson plans, attend compulsory training sessions, and being subjected to mandatory classroom visits, all techniques with which the educators philosophically disagreed. Then there were the moral insinuations that had to be endured: that Eagle students would have "performed" better if their teachers "cared more"; that Eagle teachers had been "selfish," more concerned with their professional growth than with the academic achievement of their students. For a time, remarks with the power to suck the professionalism out of teachers and teaching, punctuated life on Eagle's professional knowledge landscape.

Furthermore, the anxiety and fears of teachers were portrayed in fine-grained ways, but the anxiety and fears of the principal or the assistant principals or the anxiety and fears of officials in a school district under long-term federal court orders were not. It would be naïve to suppose that these individuals go unscathed in accountability dragon attacks—things happen to them, too, though their stories are attached to cumulative school/school district results. If teachers suffer intense humiliation, feel respect for their knowledge being withered away, and rapidly flee high poverty, urban schools and their profession in such situations, so, too, do some administrators and superintendents whose conditions of employment and terms of service are not always of their own choosing. They, too, find themselves dangerously compromised and running against the grain of their personal practical knowledge, refined through experience, which they are required to publicly reject in order to retain employment.

Also, Eagle's 1999 effect on the mid-southern state's standing could be more strongly argued as contributing to its ranking in the bottom five among the fifty states in the United States (Nissimov, 2002, pp. 25A–26A). Then, too, one could consider the mid-southern state's contribution to the United States' international ratings,[1] which also is a very important and highly disputed matter. These meta-narratives, though definitely not the topic of this inquiry, strongly factor into the dragon drama and are of foremost concern to those for whom the economy and the state of the workforce reign supreme. For these and many more reasons, the physical appearance of the dragon reflects the relationships between cover stories and the many other kinds of narratives that influence the educators' professional knowledge landscapes.

The account of the Eagle work began in Chapter 7 with a fine-grained, person-based, school-centered story constellation but ends here, in Chapter 8 with passing analysis of its broad-ranged impact. Ironically, the latter meta-narratives have more bearing on educational decision making than the former narratives do, despite the fact the stories are inextricably linked and the explanatory powers of the latter are found in the former, as narrative inquiry as a research method has a peculiar way of bringing to light. This profound revelation should give readers serious pause as they dwell on the influence of mandated testing for accountability purposes and what remains unspoken and unknown about the confounding circumstances within which educators and students are called upon to excel in the particular state and increasingly across the United States and other countries.

THE DRAGON PSYCHE

In Chapter 7, the idea of Eagle High School sparring with the test score dragon was present—the inevitability of a dragon encounter persisted. From the outset, Henry Richards named the conditions under which it would attack. What also was evident was the "unpredictable predictability" of the accountability dragon as well as its omnipresent to the point of omnipotent power.

What was not so apparent was the impact of the accountability dragon on the personal knowledge of educators other than Henry Richards who we know suffered temporary loss, but maintained his knowing and identity through avoidance, resistance, and eventual escape. Returning to the excerpt written by the experienced teacher who wept in despair, readers are reminded of her sense of swirling about in water. Her graphic depiction, through words and images, contextualized the sensation of change, the experience of the implementation dip, and the brush with the dragon. Although the teacher, like her principal, was well read and secure in her personal practical knowing, her immediate impulse was to deny her knowledge in the hope that the devastating situation would simply go away. Here, first order cover stories give way to second and third order cover stories. Here, the dragon exacts its toll in layered kinds of ways. Here, provisional plot lines pregnant with possibility risk being aborted as tightly constrained approaches to teaching and learning gain currency and forced momentum in what can only be described as a paradoxical turn of events.

THE EDUCATORS' REALITY

The Eagle inquiry reported in Chapter 7 represents a foray into territory in which this researcher normally would not stray. Coming to know the educators' storied experiences on the professional knowledge landscape of Eagle High School left me no option but to pay attention to the statistical data collected annually that shaped the educators' knowing. The study demanded that I find a way to thread together storied and numeric ways of knowing. As one teacher poignantly stated, the mandated tests "…control lives" in spite of "best knowledge" of other kinds foregrounded in reputable national and international journals. And in her next breath, she explained, that the state's accountability dragon is "very real" for those who encounter it—real, when educators' professional identities are unwarrantedly questioned; real, when students' life chances are unjustifiably cut off; and real, when people feel enormously victimized, rather than hugely enabled by a humanly constructed, authorized, and enacted system.

Given the stark contrasts and realities, I did not want to merely suggest a statistically insignificant decline in test scores in 1999 and to intimate power ascribed to quantitatve data beyond what would be defensible. I also did not want to introduce the possibility of what some would story as an implementation dip[2] without providing readers with primary evidence with which to ponder this claim. Neither did I feel comfortable issuing statements about relatively small differences between and among subgroup scores at Eagle High School. Nor did I want to leave out Eagle's 2001 scores (see Figures 8.1–8.4) that undoubtedly also will be of interest to the discriminating reader because they, too, represent insignificant change.

The occasion of narratively reconstructing the Eagle High School situation required that I set up the panoramic view of the school's drastically shifting landscape so that readers, in the spirit of narrative inquiry, could map its terrain for themselves, form their own interpretations, arrive at personal readings, as they, too, walk amid the multiple stories shaping and reshaping, defining and redefining, Eagle's backyard, forming and reforming the school stage on which the dragon saga played out.

As I personally reflected on Eagle's overall picture, I experienced a surge of recurring sadness that the 1999 events unfolded as they did. I immediately recognized the enormous panic over test scores as hysteria induced by the dragon's gatekeepers. Furthermore, the guilt borne by teachers, especially those who had invested themselves fully in the teaching of diverse, high poverty students over the long haul, was uncalled for. So, too, was the departure of Henry Richards entirely avoidable. Clearly, an inordinately complex set of forces converged on Eagle's storied landscape at the point in time I chronicled—not the least of which was the continually deteriorating socioeconomic conditions under which minority, urban youth lived in neighborhoods zoned to Eagle.

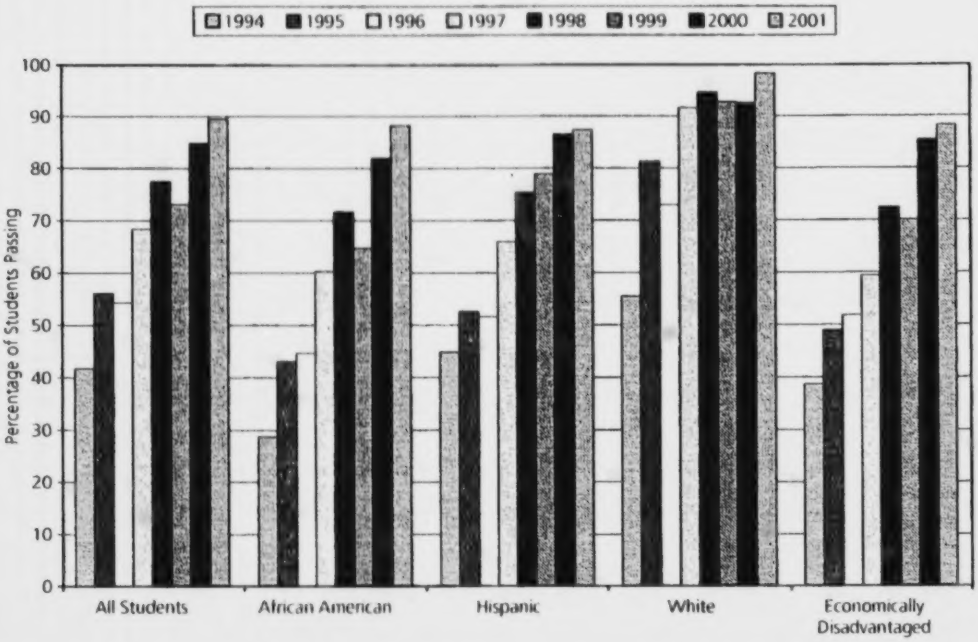

Figure 8.1. How do Eagle students perform on state-mandated standardized tests administered annually? (Mathematics)

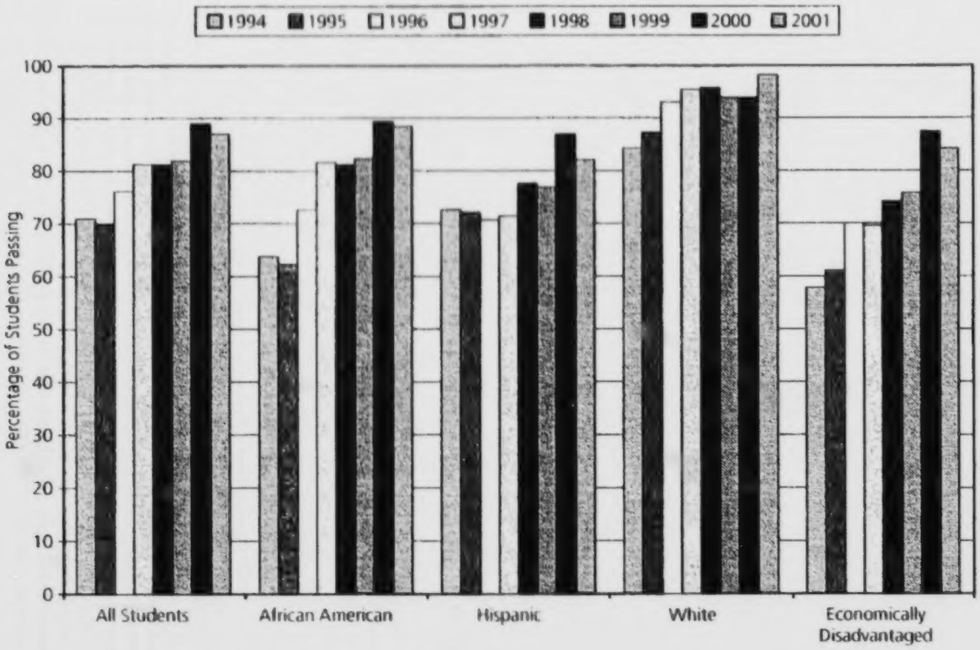

Figure 8.2. How do Eagle students perform on state-mandated standardized tests administered annually? (Reading)

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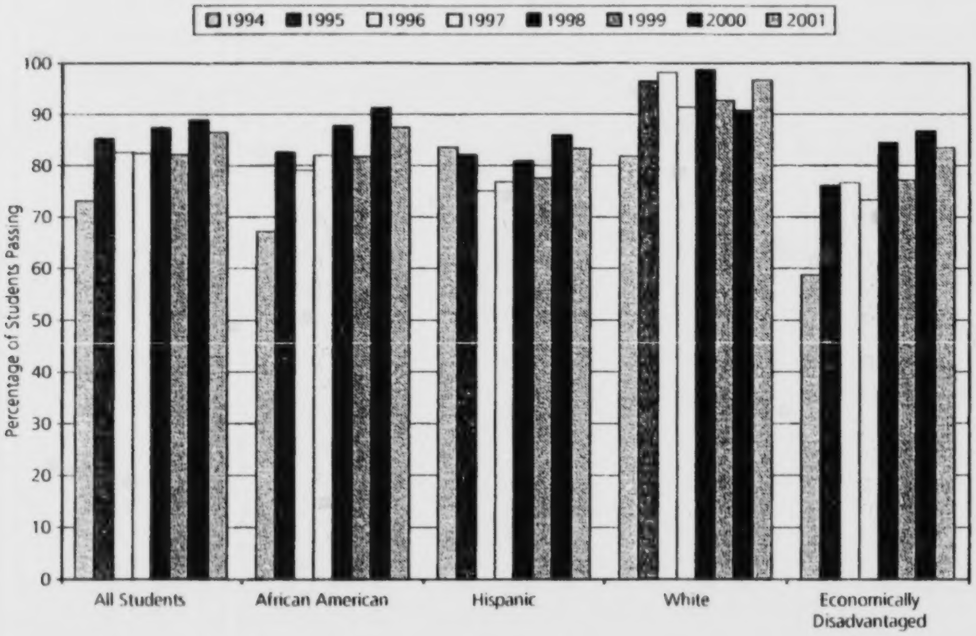

Figure 8.3. How do Eagle students perform on state-mandated standardized tests administered annually? (Writing)

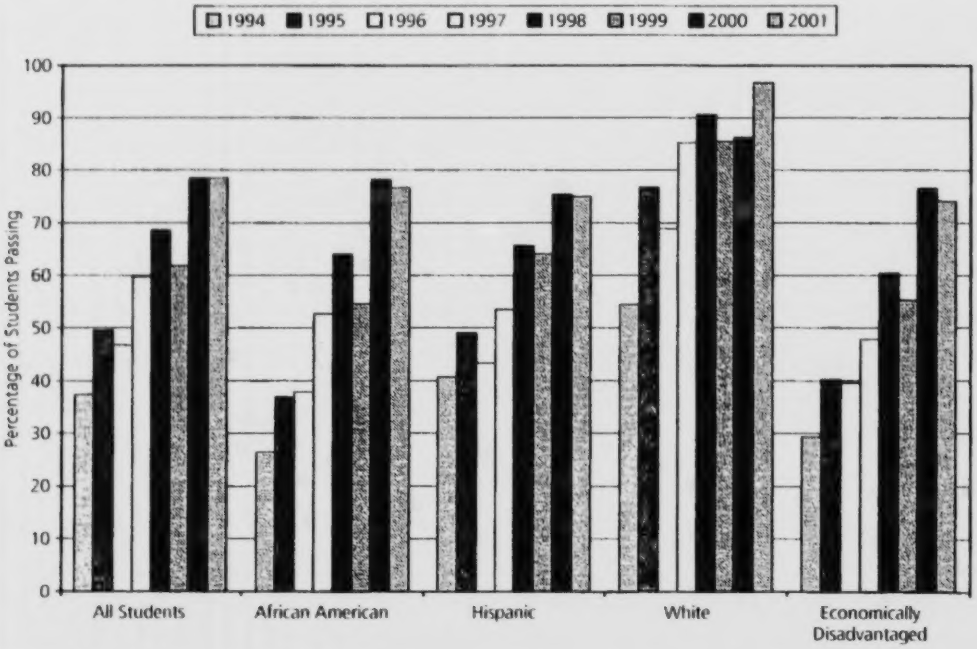

Figure 8.4. How do Eagle students perform on state-mandated standardized tests administered annually? (All Tests Taken)

What also became abundantly evident in this investigation is the tremendous disconnect between those who conduct research studies alongside school-based educators at the ground level and who intimately know the gut wrenching dilemmas they encounter and those who are called upon to advise and make policy decisions for government and funding agencies. Just as I shed different light on one of the most pernicious problems facing the educational enterprise, I hope others will bring fresh perspectives to bear in the policymaking arena. Among these, I would anticipate narrative accounts that illustrate how policies like those pertaining to testing for accountability purposes become storied and restoried, lived and relived, by students, teachers, and principals in flesh-and-blood schools like Eagle High School.

Chapter 7 dwelt on what teachers and students are asked to do, feel compelled to do, and are required to do in the name of excellence as mandated and measured in the mid-southern state. As we leave Chapter 8, readers are invited to further explore the topic, and to stop and weigh with care Eagle High School's story constellation. Only through mindful deliberation can the innumerable complexities surrounding the "dragon in school backyards" story be more fully understood. Only through different lenses can its multifold implications be identified. Only through socially responsible action can its fire-breathing capacities be harnessed.

NOTES

1. The TIMSS Report can be found at http://nces.ed.gov/timss/.
2. In *Leading in A Culture of Change* (2001), Michael Fullan states with a touch of dry humor: "Pacesetters and coercers have no empathy for people undergoing implementation dips. They wouldn't know an implementation dip if they fell into it" (p. 40).

CHAPTER 9

DESTINY HIGH SCHOOL

A Case of "The Rainbow Fish"

Henry Richards, the central character in Chapters 7 and 8, was in mid-career as an administrator when he metaphorically told and retold "the dragon in school backyards" tale that revealed his personal practical knowledge of how the state accountability system became lived at Eagle High School. Lydia Thomas, on the other hand, was a beginning principal at Destiny High School when she engaged—in a delightful, even playful, way—"the rainbow fish" metaphor to make sense of the campus' story of school and school stories to which she recently had been introduced. That narrative is captured in Chapter 9; my reflective turn (Schön, 1991) on it follows in Chapter 10.

GETTING STARTED

> At the faculty meeting in two weeks, we will discuss Destiny's development as a magnet high school. I would like you to visit us then and become properly introduced to who we are and what we do at Destiny. That will be the best way for you to become oriented to our programs and us.

With these words, Lydia Thomas warmly invited me to visit Destiny High School and to become familiar with the school context, teachers, students, and her. In the initial meeting, I quickly learned that Destiny teachers did not engage in conventional faculty meetings with procedural agendas. In

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fact, the school was small enough to have shared information handwritten on a bulletin board in the faculty lounge! This arrangement meant that meeting times at Destiny were devoted to provocative discussions about not only what the plot line of the school presently is, but what it potentially could be, for all those whose lives take shape on the landscape. And, as if to prime her own and others' creative wells, Lydia Thomas thumbed open the cover of the children's story book, *The Rainbow Fish* (Pfister, 1992), leafed through its silver-embossed pages, and purposefully read the tale to the high school teachers and me. In the intense dialogue that followed and in subsequent meetings, conversations, and interviews, I came to see how Lydia Thomas' natural gravitation to "the rainbow fish" metaphor beautifully served to exquisitely illustrate her growing personal practical knowledge of Destiny, a school context to which she was both a newcomer to place and position.

In this chapter and the following one, Lydia Thomas' coaxing of "the rainbow fish" to the surface and into somatic and allegorical relationship with Destiny High School and into discussion with the Destiny educators will be unpacked through narrating Destiny's story of school (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996) and a constellation of stories told about the school by faculty members, students, and Lydia. *The Rainbow Fish* story then will be revisited using the research text gathered in one year of intensive field work to inform its telling. But readers first need to become acquainted with the story line of the children's literature book, Lydia Thomas, the faculty of the school, the story of Destiny High School, and Destiny High School stories lived and told over time.

INTRODUCING *THE RAINBOW FISH*

An American Bookseller Book of the Year Award winner, *The Rainbow Fish* is a tale of the most beautiful fish in the ocean, a rainbow fish whose scales were colored in graduated shades of blue, green, and mauve with metallic silver laced in between. All of the common fish in the ocean—clumsy and mundane in comparison—were curious about the rainbow fish. Still, the stunning fish existed apart, reflecting its significant attributes, seemingly oblivious to fish of mainstream species. One day, a blue fish begged the rainbow fish to share a shiny scale with it. However, the rainbow fish turned the other water dweller away in a rude manner. Disappointed, the blue fish told the other aquatic creatures of the rainbow fish's behavior. Soon everybody rejected the beautiful fish.

Feeling like the loneliest amphibian in the ocean's depths, the rainbow fish sought advice from the starfish that put it in touch with the wise octopus. The rainbow fish made the long trek to the octopus's cavern. Already aware of the rainbow fish's dilemma, the wise octopus recommended that it would overcome its extreme case of unhappiness by learning to share its scales with others.

Soon the opportunity arose for the rainbow fish to interact with the other fish swimming in the ocean. Soon the rainbow fish's attributes began to be distributed among the other fish. Soon its beauty was more present within and reflected without. In this way, the rainbow fish learned to mingle and become less uptight, less burdened, less chagrined by its advantages. This shift would ready it for the major challenge of its life history: meeting "the big, blue whale" (Pfister, 1998) whose presence posed a serious threat, an event that would be documented in a *Rainbow Fish Series* sequel.

Introducing Lydia Thomas

Having completed her doctorate in educational psychology at a local university, Lydia Thomas coincidentally secured employment in the particular school district in 1994, the same year that Destiny High School opened. The position Lydia assumed was Early Childhood Coordinator/ Gifted and Talented Coordinator. In the second term of that particular year, she met a Destiny teacher who outlined the school's program using advanced terminology like learning behaviors, workplace tools, and academic foundations. The teacher also told of students storied as workers "in an academic sense" and of substitute teachers who helped to unburden the paper load typically associated with the living and telling of more personalized stories of teaching and learning. The brief overview confirmed for Lydia that Destiny High School was a campus offering differentiated instruction, a school that would not need her assistance to the extent other campuses which subscribed to more conventional stories of school, stories of teachers, and stories of students would. She did, however, visit the Community Outreach Building in which Destiny was located, but only to visit the Early Head Start and Head Start programs that also were situated there. At the time, she found the wide array of school programs—all out of the ordinary—to be a "curious collection."

After two years of living the dual coordinator roles, Lydia Thomas was promoted to Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction with a special emphasis on reading in the school district. Thomas once again returned to the multipurpose building, this time to visit the early literacy and family literacy programs. In her Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction position, Lydia Thomas additionally was invited to participate on the school district's "vision committee." While a part of that group, Lydia came in close contact with a school district representative who—unbeknownst to Thomas—was a "founding member"[1] of Destiny High School. The school district representative shared with her other critical components of Destiny's landscape—the curriculum cube, the rubrics, graduation by exhibition, the personalized learning environment, and service learning. Once again, Lydia found out about Destiny High School "in a roundabout way."

Several months later, the principal position at the community building was advertised and brought to Thomas' attention by senior school district officials. Lydia's personal story, distinguished by her central office experience and her strong early childhood, gifted and talented, and reading background, matched the institutional narrative that had been given to the Outreach Center. Furthermore, Lydia was in the process of completing her mid-management certification, which would technically qualify her to live school-based leadership stories. For Thomas, becoming the Principal of Destiny High School (80% time) and the Community Outreach Center (20% time) was "a professional opportunity that comes around once in a lifetime." She prepared for the interview diligently because, in her view, "anything worth fighting for is worth doing your homework about."

When Lydia was named Principal of the Community Outreach Center, the Assistant Superintendent responsible for Destiny met with her to share the vision of the district, where the campus had been, why it was so, where it was now, and what needed to be immediately done from an organizational perspective. Destiny High School's "climate" was particularly drawn to Thomas' attention. In the previous year, the district had conducted a routine organizational health survey in which Destiny's scores were "almost uniformly" low. School morale, for example, was a meager 9%. The single-digit figure sent up a "red flag" for district officials. As a result, Lydia's primary assignment became one of "building trust" with the faculty and sorting out relationships between programs and people in the Community Outreach Center.

When Lydia Thomas moved into the community building, one of the first rooms she surveyed was the principal's office. The previous principal, whose long-term career had been built around the short- and long-term discipline programs in the school district, had standard issue office furniture and an aquarium that produced a "fishy odor." Thomas removed the old furniture and aquarium and had her solid wood furniture from her previous office shipped to the school. In this way, she began to imprint her signature on the principal story she wanted lived on Destiny's professional knowledge landscape and on the story of school with which she had been charged. In this manner, an image illustrative of Lydia's practice began to emerge in the principal's office.

The second thing Lydia did was to carefully compose a letter to faculty and staff members, inviting them to meet privately with her before the school year began. In these lengthy discussions, Thomas became introduced to how the educators characterized Destiny's past, present, and future. She described what the teachers narrated this way:

> Each teacher, Lydia discovered, told a story about what attracted him or her to Destiny and why the school was such a special place to work—"both for teachers and kids." Each individual also had viewpoints and opinions to share concerning "the difficult time" the faculty and the school had faced … Lydia particularly recalled one teacher who told her about overcoming dyslexia and how that personally fueled the facilitator's desire to work with students who were at risk of not completing high school as typically conceived.

A self-described constructivist, one especially interested in "visual images and context," Lydia began to cobble together pieces of the experiential stories the teachers drew to her attention. Where the Destiny faculty was concerned, she realized that they had had "good, sound professional development" in terms of "pinpointing problems, analyzing problems, dialoguing about problems," but a "disconnect" existed with respect to positive action based on sustained reflection. Lydia further recognized a secondary "disconnect" between the programs that operated within the Community Outreach Center and within the school district. As a result, she planned a major social event, a brunch, at the beginning of the school year in an effort to establish a commonplace around which the divergent faculty could come together. In this way, Lydia began to live her Destiny story as "an administrator facilitator," one who could ease the figuring out process and keep the school district in the loop so that the campus would not feel isolated—"swimming upstream, all by itself." In this manner, Lydia began to develop trust among the educators, particularly the Destiny High School teachers. Through this method, her identity as a principal living a highly consultative story became known.

A third thing Thomas instituted was a one-year faculty inquiry into "Who are we?" and "How good are we at who we are?" at Destiny High School, an intentional deliberation that wound its way through all faculty and professional development meetings in the particular academic year. Lydia chose this narrative path because the teachers living the small high school story, to her *and* their way of thinking, appeared "stuck" and "unable to see themselves and their context clearly" at that point in time. Like the essential questions the teachers vigorously pursued with their students, the queries nudged faculty members into investigating their individual and collective identities and examining the nature and extent of their school's goodness. They urged the teachers to review what they had done, to feel better about it, and to develop a cleaner line of thinking in terms of what they needed to do next. One original teacher chose the following words to crystallize the process' influence on her:

> . . . Lydia caused me to think more than anyone I have ever known because after we would have one of those sessions, I would go home and think some more . . . I would have to think in new ways . . . And sometimes I would call her up and sometimes I would talk to her the next day and say: "Well, you have done it again . . . caused me think and reconsider."

The "deep and long" analysis culminated in a 25-page booklet printed on 81/2 × 14" paper that documented the fruits of the sustained inquiry. In keeping with Lydia Thomas' personal biography, it charted, through visual means, Destiny High School's reform journey and conveyed the multifaceted ways that the context had shaped identities and how individual and collective goodness was perceived to be present on the campus. Then, two years later, the approach became adapted and used by other participating campuses in the reform movement (Reform Movement, 2001–2002).

Introducing the Destiny Faculty and Staff

Totaling 25 people in all, Destiny High School's faculty consisted of 1 remaining founding member of the school, a further 6 teachers who opened the campus, a few individuals who had been there since the beginning, and a number of new employees who began to work on the campus when original faculty members left or when the school population expanded. In short, Destiny's faculty was composed of educators who had come to the campus in a number of different ways, ranging from original and almost original teachers to early and middle adopters to latest hires.

The Story of Destiny High School: A *Rainbow Fish* Telling

Picture an innovative Community Outreach Center that offers a full range of educational services that span the "womb to tomb" nature of the human life cycle. Visualize the professional knowledge landscape of Destiny High School, a small campus tucked inside the building that painstakingly was created "from scratch" in 1994. Consider further that 160 students attend Destiny and that the selected students reflect the demographics of the school district: 84% White, 10% African American, 6% Hispanic, 9% special needs, 16% economically disadvantaged. Imagine also that a peer review committee hand selects the teachers who instruct these students. The peer review committee members include representation from the campus founders and a significant number of other individuals who intimately know the school's start-up story as a small non-traditional American high school.

Located in a mostly affluent, suburban area recently annexed to one of the largest cities in the United States, Destiny High School is one of three high schools in the school district: two large, comprehensive campuses (each about as large as Eagle High School featured in Chapters 7 and 8) and one non-conventional campus, Destiny High School. LEAP, a self-directed program for older students, and Destiny High School are situated in the Community Outreach Center. Also located in the building are twelve other programs that focus on childcare, early literacy, English as a second language, the education of pregnant teenagers, and short and long-term discipline programs. On the whole, the Center is composed of "a mismatch of stuff" loosely seamed together by the 80% + 20% time allocation assigned to the principal.

An experimental campus, Destiny High School was conceived of a particular urgency. In a review of quantitative and qualitative data, the school district discovered that an increasing number of adolescents longed to enter the district's long-term discipline program as a way to complete high school in a learning environment very different from the district's large comprehensive high schools. A second growing segment of the district's high school student population chose to complete the requirements through at-home studies. These two visible retreats from conventional American high school stories available to students prompted district officials to respond to the trend. Left unattended, such phenomena, from the school district's perspective, could increase the dropout rate and negatively influence community satisfaction in the future.

Two related events, along with the identified trends, also contributed to the creation of the Destiny High School landscape. One of these originating events (Schein, 1985) was the preparation of a proposal to create a 'break the mold' high school that was submitted to the New American Schools Development Corporation[2] in 1991. Although the proposal was not awarded,[3] the carefully crafted text formed a compelling argument that a non-conventional high school seriously was needed in the school district. The second originating event was that local voters approved a bond election in the fall of 1991 that included funds for the construction of an alternate learning facility. No specific details regarding what the facility would look like were provided at that time, but construction funds were earmarked for what would later become the Community Outreach Center. All in all, these developments meant that several key building blocks for the design of a small, atypical high school were put in place in the school district. Namely, there was evidence that significant student demand for such a program existed, an argument that a 'break the mold' school was called for, and the availability of funds to build an alternate facility that would house a number of programs, one being Destiny High School.

According to the majority of the school founders, the original charge given to the Destiny planning team was to write "integrated curriculum for adolescent learners." That charge, in one founding member's words, eventually became translated into the creation of a "highly personalized learning environment within a small high school setting." Whereas some individuals maintained that Destiny High School was meant to be a "storefront high school" or a "magnet campus" that "never quite made it" or what LEAP, a self-paced program for older learners, currently is, still others believed that "no preconceived vision"—"no definite prescription"—for Destiny High School existed. The district representative on the Destiny planning committee recalls the team being assured that the school was "undefined" and that they were to "design at will"—"story as they saw fit." Stated differently, they were to "let their imaginations run wild," create "the best possible [high school] conditions for [learning] to happen." At the same time, they were to "forget all they knew about traditional schooling." In Lydia's words, they additionally were to engage in "fishing expeditions" to other states and countries to "capture glimpses of what public education might look like in the future," an approach the teachers overwhelmingly recognized as a "big time investment" on the part of a single school district.

Viewed through this lens, Destiny High School was a "reform project" from the moment it was decided that a third high school, one with a nonconventional professional knowledge landscape, would blend better with the stories particular adolescent learners bring to school. As one first wave faculty member put it, Destiny was "all about change from the very beginning." In his words, it was never about taking an "existing [high school] and tweaking it," although Destiny High School was, by implicit and explicit design, meant to improve upon the educational practices offered by the district's existing comprehensive high schools. Similar arguments could also be framed for the other programs located in the Community Outreach Building which also "filled gaps" in the district's offerings.

Founding Members

The individuals who formed the planning committee to conceptualize Destiny High School represented a number of different disciplines and interest areas. Referred to as the "founding members," the group of female educators met over a sustained period of time to create a vision for Destiny. Interestingly, the number of founding members differed, depending on who recounted the narrative history. The most commonly acknowledged number of founding members is four to five. Here, the six most frequently mentioned members and the strengths they brought to the formation of the story of school are described.

Strongly committed to the small innovative high school plot line, the school district representative brought the central office perspective to the table, and negotiated many "treacherous shoals" the others, of their own admission, would have been unable to "politically navigate." The school district representative's role, in her words, was to "shepherd, protect, enhance" the high school making project. Meanwhile, the Principal of the Discipline Program, who later became the first Principal of Destiny High School, firmly believed in the need for alternate programs for district youth. She was not as free to be present at meetings as other design team members were because her existing role continued to demand her attention while the story of the new high school was conceived. Thus, some included her among the school authors while others glossed over the part she played.

The remaining four people were teachers. One came to the design task with a story of strong social studies instruction and the teaching of honors courses. This teacher's narrative continued to unfold in the school from 1994 to 1999 as the Curriculum Specialist. A second teacher brought an English background and a community perspective to the design story. She is remembered for always approaching situations from the student perspective. "What would a student's experience be?" was the perpetual question she posed and the lens through which she approached and considered potential school features. That teacher continues to head up Destiny High School's nationally recognized service learning narrative.[4] The third teacher, currently the visionary, lead instructor of the LEAP program, contributed her strong curriculum writing background along with her science specialty area to the creation of the story of Destiny High School. The final individual had a mathematics background and was the first of Destiny's school-based founding members to leave. Her experience in creating Destiny helped her to become an administrator of another district campus where she brought to fruition many of the ideas she embraced while co-composing Destiny's story of school.

The Design Process

When the founding members of Destiny came together to create the story of the small experimental high school, planning "magic" did not occur overnight. In fact, many of the members recall the initial time together as a "source of frustration" because individuals—typically accustomed to being told what to do—did not know what was expected of them. After all, as one of them succinctly put it, "How does one go about designing a school?" In other words, how is a "story of school" composed from scratch?

One major turning point took place early in the work. During the preliminary stages of planning, the district representative recalled having two conflicting appointments and absolutely needing to be at the first one. This scheduling conflict left the teachers alone. On their own accord, they decided to brainstorm charts of paper that storied their "dreams and aspirations" with respect to what they thought Destiny's school narrative should be. When the district representative returned, she found her colleagues immersed in the work and "somewhat apologetic" and "self-conscious" about what they had done. The district representative, on the other hand, was "thrilled" because her school-based colleagues had begun to maneuver—to swim unassisted—and to see her as "just another member of the design team" whose responsibilities were somewhat different than their own.

During the design phase, the founding members became voracious readers of the literature on school reform and frequent visitors to other national and international sites. The educators particularly became enthralled with the ideas of Sizer (1984)—Destiny joined the Coalition of Essential Schools reform movement early in its institutional history[5]—and Senge's (1995) work concerning "learning organizations." The inquiries of both these academics highly influenced, and continue to influence, the development of the campus. More recently, the scholarship of Newmann (1996) and his associates has directly informed the school's plot line development. As can be seen, Destiny's fishing-for-ideas excursions not only occurred in the past—they continue into the present.

The Vision

In the design phase, the emergent vision for Destiny's school context began to gel in a manner pleasing to the primary authors of the small story of school. Destiny's mission became one that has been repeatedly revisited and re-tuned by the faculty over the five years of the campus' existence:

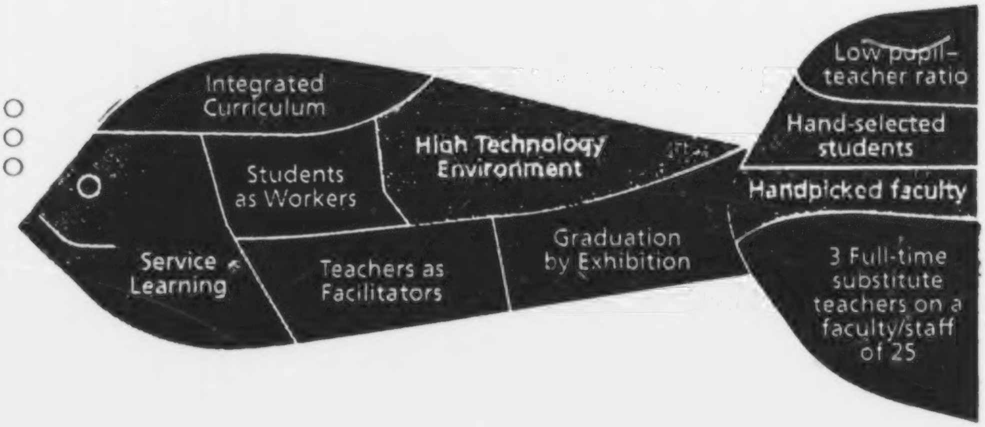
> Destiny High School is committed to providing a personalized learning experience in a working partnership with the community to create life-long learners and successful members of society.

Along with the statement of mission, a number of guiding principles for the development of Destiny programs were agreed upon as well. These statements dealt with the nature of learning, ideas about an ideal school environment, and relationships with parents, the community, and the world.

Toward the end of the first design phase, it was decided that prospective Destiny High school students would be referred to as "workers" and that the faculty members would be known as "learning facilitators" (the word adopted for teachers). Furthermore, eight more learning facilitators were added to the five founding members who remained on campus. These additional eight facilitators (of which six remained on the faculty at the time of writing) understandably brought with them personal stories, dreams, and aspirations for Destiny. They participated "in a very lengthy, detailed interview process." One activity involved "cooperative, curriculum planning." Placed in interdisciplinary teams with prospective teaching partners, candidates were asked to plan and enact a particular segment of course work in a role-play situation. This activity was accomplished with the founding members sitting in the outer circle, pondering how the individual teacher's curriculum making articulated within a group setting potentially matched the story of Destiny High School they had scripted, but all would be expected to live.

BRIDGE 1

Thus far, the story of Destiny High School that Lydia Thomas metaphorically introduced as "a rainbow fish" has been presented and some of its depths have been delved into. In keeping with Lydia Thomas' penchant for visual and contextual images, the following sketch recapitulates the features—the scales—Thomas and others narrated through the story of Destiny High School they told.


Integrated Curriculum
Students as Workers
High Technology Environment
Service Learning
Teachers as Facilitators
Graduation by Exhibition
Low pupil-teacher ratio
Hand-selected students
Handpicked faculty
3 Full-time substitute teachers on a faculty/staff of 25

Having offered this panoramic view of Destiny's professional knowledge landscape, the underbelly of the teachers' experiences, the underbelly of the rainbow fish—Destiny High School stories—will now be chronicled.

DESTINY SCHOOL STORIES: A *RAINBOW FISH* TELLING

Philosophical Orientations and Challenges

Despite the intent to hire a "philosophically coherent" faculty from scratch, differences in mindset, according to some of Destiny's lead facilitators, arose as early as the trial curriculum planning sessions. Although Destiny in its entirety was "a change proposition" and educators were "carefully screened," subtle philosophical differences among people, as well as "different levels of tolerance for change," have existed from the school's inception. One of the eight teachers who joined the faculty prior to the school's official opening described the facilitators' different capacities for change this way:

> Some want to linger and figure things out more. Some say it is time to get past start-up issues . . . Others do not want to change the original plan at all, you know . . . The big metaphor I keep using is that we are in this big huge rowboat. And there are people in the front who are rowing hard and there are people in the back barely moving at all (*acts out the motions, demonstrates how the paddles would be positioned*) . . . And it is really hard, because when you get down to issues, even sometimes just defining terms in the mission statement . . . What is personalized learning? What is a lifelong learner? . . . Who is a member in a community? . . . What do those things mean to people? . . . Not only were they not the same when we began, they would be completely different now after five years of sitting around and thinking about things.

Destiny began with one house (four classrooms with teacher facilitators representing each of the four core subject areas) that lived more of a behaviorist story in its philosophy and practices, and one house (four classrooms with teacher facilitators representing each of the four core subject areas) that leaned toward a constructivist stance in its practices. According to a newcomer to the school, the first house's lived story continues to be more "thinking," the latter house's narrative tends to be more "feeling." As time has passed, however, tensions between the two houses/two stories have been less striking as newly hired educators have entered into and interrupted the mix and ongoing negotiation has taken place among faculty members concerning matters of definition, substance, and interpretation of high quality teaching and learning at Destiny. As one facilitator perceptively noted, "...the [struggle] is greatly reduced now that our sense of community has grown . . . consensus helps to balance things." "The conflicts we have had have held truths up to scrutiny," added yet another. Still other teachers attributed the knife's edge tensions Destiny experienced in its five years of existence as embedded in the competing, and often, conflicting, approaches to learning that are "pervasive throughout the field of education," not only played out on Destiny High School's professional knowledge landscape.

Dissonant philosophical positions additionally were embedded in incongruent theories of action (Schōn & McDonald, 1998) underlying the stories given to Destiny and the story being lived and told in the short and long term discipline programs also located within the Community Outreach Center. When Destiny first opened, the founding principal was the sole administrator for the whole building which included the discipline programs that formed the heart of her personal narrative and prior to that point in time, her sole responsibility. The expanded story of principal she assumed in 1994 was considered by many to be a "virtually impossible job" because of "the breadth of the work, never ceasing start-up problems, and the fact that no prior story existed [for the Principal of the Community Outreach Center or for the Outreach Center]." Furthermore, in 1998–1999, the routine occupational health survey, mentioned earlier, revealed Destiny's very low morale and very high stress levels, symptoms commonly experienced by faculty members on high-pitched reforming campuses (Muncy & McQuillan, 1996). Like other reforming schools, Destiny's fishing expeditions occasionally gathered ideas too numerous and burdensome to be satisfyingly integrated into personal and communal knowing—regardless of their desirability.

The deep-seated tensions evident at Destiny at that particular time also were associated with a principal "living another story." More of a "manager than a transformational leader," she was, as the educators explained in their reform case study, "highly effective in helping the school get on its feet." At the same time, she, in their view, did not seem to have the "visioning prowess" and "the experience of developing a faculty to its capacity . . ." (Destiny High School, 2002). Still, her more conventional narrative paradoxically steered Destiny clear of community backlash due to the school's avant-garde nature.

A further confounding factor was that Destiny became a lead campus in a second East Coast reform project, the one common to the case studies already presented, the one that fitted well with the philosophy of the Coalition of Essential Schools. In one facilitator's view, the second reform association "further accelerated" the pace of change, turning it, in his words, into "near revolution" proportion. Unlike some of his colleagues, he believed "the longer we take to create this [new story of a high school], the more secure it will be—the better foundation it will have." Here, different tolerances for change and different degrees of change—even consonant change with which the educators "wholeheartedly agreed"—again entered the picture.

Since the outset, then, the Destiny facilitators have wrestled with internal and external philosophical battles relating to equal, highly prized values (Cuban, 1990) about teaching, learning, use of time, student discipline, and so forth. A particular narrative concerning the Community Outreach Center clearly illustrates the conflicting philosophies and conflicting theories of action that emerged early in the stories Destiny's learning facilitators crafted about the school's development.

When the eight additional faculty members were added to the original founding members on the Destiny staff and the campus was not ready to open, the teachers were assigned to teach in the long-term discipline program in the Community Outreach Center (within which the principal's roots were grounded) in order to earn their interim salaries. This assignment of their time meant that they served as instructors in one of the most highly structured, intentionally impersonal learning environments in the school district in one part of their school day while they planned the most deliberately unstructured, highly personalized learning environment in the school district in the other part of their day. A further non-publicly revealed difference—but one acknowledged in interviews—was that students involved in the long-term discipline program disproportionately represented minority populations whereas Destiny students mirrored the predominantly white demographics of the district. The sharp contrasts in composition and approach between the discipline programs and Destiny High School continued to exist in the Community Outreach Center in 1999–2000. One faculty member further storied the less-than-subtle nuances the overall Center context presents in this way:

> The [odd assortment] has worked against [Destiny] from the very beginning ... Because in the building there is the discipline programs, here and there, the early literacy wing over here, and all the pregnant kids in the district over there. Well, if you were an adolescent, and you attended Destiny, it was automatically assumed you were either pregnant or a bad kid. That was the perception.

The major philosophical differences, misguided assumptions, and different stories available to different groups of teachers and students resulted in Community Center youth sharing the same lunchroom, but never inhabiting the same space at the same time. In fact, students in particular programs in the Community Outreach Center were kept separate "by design." In the past, a conscientious effort was made "to keep schedules different—to keep associations different." However, with Lydia Thomas' arrival and her metaphorical exploration of not only Destiny's but the Center's "rainbow fish" tendencies, this practice became modified somewhat, while paying attention to "the integrity of the programs" and "the security of students." Some Destiny students, for example, currently enroll in LEAP algebra courses. And others have conducted service learning projects in the Head Start and Early Head Start programs and put their Spanish into real life action in the Family Literacy Program. As can be seen, preliminary connections have begun to be built between the diverse projects and youth housed in the larger Community Outreach Center during Lydia Thomas' tenure. Beginning steps have been taken to bridge people and programs.

Contrary to commonly held public perceptions about the Community Outreach Center, Destiny has not admitted students who are "identified discipline problems" although the usual adolescent developmental issues are readily apparent. The local students the Destiny program typically attracts are gifted individuals, average students not in a special population, at-risk students, and handicapped students in a full inclusion model. Although this portion of the district student population sounds like a "regular lot," Destiny's "slice of the pie," in one facilitator's words, "is composed of an amazing collection of 'spider kids,' 'cowboys,' and 'jocks' who have learned to commingle." Destiny's teachers emphasize that 90–95% of the students who choose to attend the made-from-scratch campus do so because they are dissatisfied with the stories they must live in the middle school and comprehensive high school contexts in the school district. In the counselor's opinion, students' narratives vary, with some of the concerns relating to social issues, and other concerns being academic. Some students cite competition among students as the reason for their departures from the large high school environments whereas others indicate that they have not been "challenged sufficiently." Still others seek "academic refuge from their peer group" while others have heard peer stories that Destiny is a "really cool place to learn."' Due to the nature of its independent program, others mistakenly think that Destiny is a "soft touch," a myth soundly dispelled in entry interviews.

School Organization

Through what Lydia Thomas described as an "intense comprehensive process" of selection, students at Destiny High School initially were organized in grades 9–12[6] multiage groupings with a pupil-teacher ratio of less than 17:1 and four classrooms/families per house. Where mathematics is concerned, three facilitators instruct Destiny's 160 students. Like the stories of exclusive private schools in the urban core, Destiny enjoys highly advantageous pupil-teacher ratios, particularly when compared to the local "mega-high schools" in the district in which one mathematics instructor typically teaches 155 students. Similarly, teachers in the science department in the large comprehensive high schools roughly equal the full complement of Destiny facilitators. Meanwhile, funding from the second reform movement allowed Destiny to be further staffed with three full-time substitute teachers[7]—meaning Destiny was given more auxiliary support than comprehensive high schools approximately twenty-five times its size.

During their tenures at Destiny, students remain in the same family throughout their personalized high school experience. The creation of families of students and teachers also represents a striking departure from the stories available to be lived in regular fare programs in the large comprehensive high schools. In Destiny's two functioning houses, four families exist, each with its own facilitator. Each family at Destiny additionally has its own symbol or emblem that distinguishes it. One facilitator's family, for example, was known as the "Cone Heads" whereas another facilitator's family was known as the "Potato Heads." Destiny's Student Handbook portrayed the family concept as:

> ... the backbone of Destiny. It is the place where every student belongs to an important group. It is often the first place where students make friends with other students and adults. Family is the one thing that makes Destiny unique; it is not homeroom; it is not advisory; it is caring people spending time together helping to make the Destiny High School experience meaningful both personally and academically.

Throughout the week, considerable time is devoted for family members to meet, along with "aunts" and "uncles" whose stories develop elsewhere in the school (library, media lab, aides, substitute teachers). As a result, student and teacher timetables at Destiny High School markedly differ from those of teachers and students whose lives unfold in large high schools contexts.

Time	*Activity*
7:30 a.m.	Family Time
8:00 a.m.	Exploratory Foundations
9:00 a.m.	Math
10:00 a.m.	Uninterrupted Work Time
11:45 a.m.	Lunch
12:30 p.m.	Science
1:30 p.m.	Wellness
2:15 p.m.	Family Time

Similarly students' graduation dates contrast with their comprehensive high school counterparts. Some Destiny students graduate a full year early whereas others complete high school in five years. In Lydia Thomas' words, "The quest for students to graduate in a predetermined time [three to four years] and with a set group of classmates is less articulated and less adhered to at Destiny."

In addition to its unique identity, each Destiny family has its own distinctive character and its own "communal story" that becomes lived. Families meet in different places, engage in different activities, and generally bring narrative and paradigmatic knowledge together and anchor it in core curriculum in different ways. On any given day, one family can be observed playing a game, another discussing a social issue, while still others may be reviewing homework assignments and deadlines, and discussing how to use time more effectively. Some members of the Destiny faculty strongly favor the mandating of a common family curriculum; other faculty members vehemently are opposed. Here, too, different beliefs held by faculty members are publicly articulated.

But one thing Destiny's facilitators solidly agree upon is that the family organization is the school's "most powerful tool for change." In short, Destiny's most precious feature, from the teachers' points of view, is the family stories they are able to live in community with their students and colleagues. To them, family plot lines, lived in multifaceted, in flux sorts of ways, form the nexus—the wellspring—of personal, interpersonal, and instructional change at Destiny. This point of strength was distilled from the school inquiry Lydia Thomas initiated. This source of power was unanimously named as one to be intentionally acted on by Destiny's facilitators.

Learning Facilitators

Destiny's learning facilitators live team teaching stories which necessarily puts them in close relationship with one another and causes their practices to be held open to intense scrutiny. The facilitators also make themselves readily available to individual students to ensure depth of student learning, a principle closely associated with the Coalition of Essential Schools' "less is more" curricular orientation. In one facilitator's view, the educators at Destiny do not just "pilot stuff." Unlike teachers in the local comprehensive high schools, Destiny educators are able to experiment and have the authorial power to make innovation "a vital part of school life"—a distinct component of the made-from-scratch school's story and their lived and told stories as educators. As one long time teacher remarked, "this has pleased us ... We have been able to evolve and develop so much—with a free hand ... We have been allowed to do it by ourselves."

A relative newcomer to the campus portrayed Destiny's faculty as a "group of highly intelligent people who have high expectations of themselves and each other, people who are keenly aware of the criticism the school receives in the district." Another, building on Lydia Thomas' "rainbow fish" metaphor, aptly compared teaching at Destiny to "life in a fishbowl," with people peering in, "compounding the stress associated with change." A five-year veteran followed suit by noting that people constantly "tap on the glass—just to see how the test case fish are doing." The latter facilitator added that many do so in the hopes of discovering that they have failed and that the school's innovative plot line will be beached or that its innovative plot line will be brought into line with other campuses of "the comprehensive school species." In the particular individual's view, everyone on and off the school landscape "knows" the district could "pull the plug" on the experimental high school at any time. Personnel in other programs in the Community Outreach Center, other schools in the district, the district office, as well as other participating schools in the reform movements, regularly articulate this view as well. This ever-present possibility bounds the Destiny educators' knowing, and constantly reminds them that if they drift too far from the school district shore they may be unceremoniously reeled in.

The most common rub is the frequently cited complaint that Destiny High School and its facilitators "don't play by the rules"—that Destiny High School and its facilitators are "a privileged lot." The major rule alleged to be broken is that Destiny facilitators are paid one-sixth more than what other teachers regularly are paid in the school district. What often is not publicized, though, is that Destiny facilitators are always available to students (do not have individual preparation time), and that it is more cost effective for the district to deliberately "break this rule" than to hire additional staff for Destiny. A second rule that has not been adhered to over time relates to equity and opportunities within the district. Due to the school's leading edge story of school and its reform movement connections, Destiny's faculty has had the freedom and funds to engage in national and international "fishing-for-ideas trips." This privilege represents a major sore spot for other district educators and schools, and even challenges those positioned in central office. Again, the cut-above-the-rest sentiment bubbles to the surface. A third way Destiny breaks rules is with its lunchroom program. Due to the low pupil-teacher enrollment of the school and the Outreach Center, the lunchroom typically operates "in the red," with the large, comprehensive high schools presumably making up the financial shortfall. These matters, coupled with the preferential staffing ratio—all of which shriek of privilege—cause Destiny's story of school and the stories teachers live within it to be the brunt of much criticism.

Lines of Authority

Although Destiny began with a very flat, highly egalitarian school structure with all teachers acting as learning facilitators and all students considered workers, the curriculum specialist position evolved in the first year of operation into an administrative role. With the leadership story covering the principal's "impossible," almost whole building mandate, Destiny High School needed someone to make on-the-spot, spur-of-the-moment decisions. The curriculum specialist assumed this dimension of the "impossible job," taking on a plot line frequently referred to by other facilitators as a "quasi-administrator"—"a not quite there administrator" position. This development set the curriculum specialist's story apart from other facilitators' stories, a matter that was a departure from the founding narrative of a flat organization that many, though reportedly not all, envisioned for the school. Furthermore, although the curriculum specialist was given the authority to sign checks, lead discussions, and so on, the role did not carry with it sufficient administrative authority in the educational conduit to bring other matters and decisions into action. Neither did it provide for the cultivation of leadership skills in a conventional sense and the development of "formal networks to share what was happening at Destiny." Hence, the dual leadership plot lines initially present on the design team eventually became lived as dual leadership plot lines in Destiny's first four years of small high school existence.

As a result, the shared decision making model, so fundamentally important to Destiny's story of school in its inaugural years, subsequently tended to play out in a way that was "contrary to what [the teachers] anticipated." Under the direction of the "quasi-administrator," the faculty would engage in "circuitous discussions" that, at some point, necessitated "closure, decisions, ... action." However, when consensus was not reached within the group of individuals who were organizationally equal, the original Center administrator—"out of a sense of urgency, not malice"—would single-handedly make decisions that would be acted on. As one faculty member put it, the former principal would "see the faculty sinking—see the school sinking" in the great abyss of the school district ocean and would step in and "bail them out." The highly unsatisfactory decision-making process and subsequent resolutions appear to have occurred due to persistent challenges associated with the split administrative functions, particular formal and informal leadership stories simultaneously being lived, and the pressing need for decisions to be made, particularly with respect to participation in the meta-level narratives associated with the reform movements and the school district. Often, the teachers found themselves desperately robbing time from one thing to be thrust into "unsatisfactory decision making" about another. Frequently, they overtapped their wells which left them feeling "drained, sapped." This complex mix of factors churned the unprecedented high stress and low morale experienced at Destiny in 1998–1999. Furthermore, the faculty's over-the-top melancholic state tended to increase in situations when the school district became involved, a development intimately connected to the school's spawning process and the fact that teachers originally were positioned more centrally as school authors. The teachers' sadness understandably seemed to heighten whenever they perceived their shaping effects being washed away and their professional knowledge landscape increasingly conforming to mainstream policies and procedures.

Curriculum

In the eyes of many facilitators and supporters, the crowning achievement of Destiny's High School's lived institutional story is its curriculum design. Planned around the four-year cycle of essential questions associated with the Coalition of Essential Schools, these thematic guiding questions formed the axis around which planning and instruction at Destiny revolved.

4-Year Cycle of Essential Questions

- Where Is The I In Group?
- What Is Chaos? What Is Order?
- How Do We Get From There To Here?
- Where Do We Go From Here?

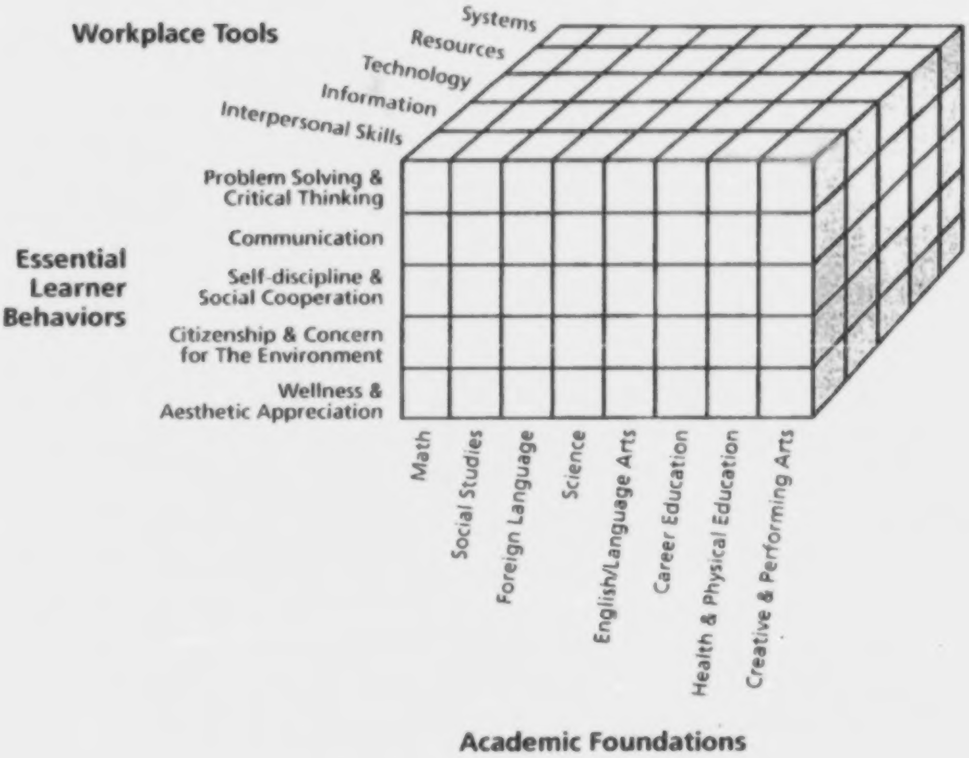
A Destiny teacher who hailed from a conventional middle school—where she routinely graded 155 papers when assignments were given—was "spellbound" by how both students and facilitators experienced curricular activities. Where the students were concerned, she explained:

> . . . Seeing kids . . . really engaged in learning. I was impressed by how much they were learning and taking responsibility for their own learning . . . I had never seen students working without a teacher sitting over them, without an eye on them all the time.

Of the facilitators, she remarked:

> The teachers here probably work harder than the kids. It is amazing to sit on the Tuesday curriculum meetings and see everything they do in Exploratory Foundations. The teachers write the whole curriculum . . . it is not, we'll use the textbook and the curriculum guides the district has for courses as in other schools. These are used as alignment, but the teachers actually bring together everything as a group and it is just phenomenal to me how they put it all together.

Destiny's cubelike, three-dimensional curriculum model involves "the TOOLS [used] to acquire the BEHAVIORS within the context of the ACADEMIC FOUNDATIONS." The model includes eight attribute areas associated with Academic Foundations, five attribute areas associated with Learner Behaviors, and five attribute areas associated with Workplace Tools.


Workplace Tools
Systems
Resources
Technology
Information
Interpersonal Skills
Essential Learner Behaviors
Problem Solving & Critical Thinking
Communication
Self-discipline & Social Cooperation
Citizenship & Concern for The Environment
Wellness & Aesthetic Appreciation
Math
Social Studies
Foreign Language
Science
English/Language Arts
Career Education
Health & Physical Education
Creative & Performing Arts
Academic Foundations

Destiny students are expected to demonstrate mastery of objectives at a level of 80% or above on the rubrics in the three curricular domains: Academic Foundations, Learner Behaviors, and Workplace Tools. Throughout the process, they are given continuous feedback relating to their works-in-progress and are required to use technology to show what they know. In keeping with Destiny's belief in authentic achievement, students also participate in self-assessments on a regular basis. The use of rubrics as well as a constant feedback process helps Destiny students to, in their words, "work toward high standards," "to learn from mistakes," to increase the ability to "self assess," and to become acquainted with the nature of "deep learning" that will serve them well in life. In doing so, they naturally merge paradigmatic and narrative ways of knowing—just like their teachers do when they plan for instruction.

Graduation by Exhibition

Where "student achievement" is concerned, Destiny does not award conventional letter or number grades to its students or make those kinds of representations of their achievement available to admitting universities. As one facilitator stories it, "Learning, not grades, is #1 at Destiny." Interestingly, this matter has not handicapped student admissions to college.

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Instead of graded transcripts, Destiny students submit portfolios of their best work to institutions of higher learning. Accompanied by a narrative guide, these portfolios typically include a senior exhibition proposal, a graduation application, a self-portrait, academic work samples, career plans, a research paper, and a media profile. These portfolios capture—"hook"—the interest of prospective university recruiters. Destiny students subsequently find themselves invited to expand upon the "lived experiences" conveyed in their portfolio entries in university entrance interviews.

Service Learning

Another critical element and highly acclaimed feature of Destiny High School's curricular story is its service learning component. Service learning, in the lead facilitator's words, "is learning through the experience of accepting civic responsibility and rendering service to the community." "Learning by giving" is the way students put it.

Under the very able leadership of the founding member with the strong community interest, sustained instruction time is set aside every Tuesday morning for students to participate in service learning work. Every semester students complete thirty hours of community service. Service learning activities typically take place in such sites as elementary schools, middle schools, parks, fire departments, law offices, insurance agencies, veterinary clinics, churches, nursing homes, daycare facilities, adult assistance centers, music troupes and theatres, internet companies, gymnasiums, and libraries. As stated earlier, some students also provide service to other programs housed in the Community Outreach Building.

When Destiny students graduate by exhibition, community service also forms a significant part of their collaborative projects. Students additionally leave a community service legacy to the school on which incoming students can build. One group of students, for example, as part of their exhibition on the effects of music on society, contributed compact disks featuring musical therapy selections to the school library. Another group created an anti-smoking web page, and developed a smoking awareness program for forthcoming Destiny students to share with elementary students in the district. All in all, Destiny's service learning emphasis, deeply anchored in the school's curriculum inquiry focus, transcends mere notions of content, service, and charity, to cultivate habits of mind associated with a more thoughtful and caring citizenry.

BRINGING THE FEATURES TOGETHER

As is abundantly evident, the many expressions of Destiny's curriculum story and how it is lived is as different as fire is to water to what is commonly practiced elsewhere in the school district and in other schools involved in the reform movement. Furthermore, it is labor intensive from every conceivable angle. As a result, Destiny's curricular approach is unique in terms of story *and* staffing which, in turn, "raises feelings of jealousy" because it is perceived as "not being good." At the same time, Lydia Thomas realizes that some find it "squishy," because of its relationship to the overall educational context within which the story of one of the massive high schools and the story of the experimental small school both yield the state's exemplary rating. She explains:

> This [paradox] is one of the major ironies of more affluent districts ... The response we get ... is basically this: "We are passing [state accountability tests] at 99 percent ... and we are an exemplary school, you know, how could we be any better? ... But it is intellectual quality [not quantitative test scores on basic skills tests administered annually] we are talking about.

Here, Lydia Thomas makes explicit the fact that high test scores are not to be confused with high quality educational experiences, a misperception that provides the public—particularly citizens residing in affluent neighborhoods—with a misplaced sense of security.

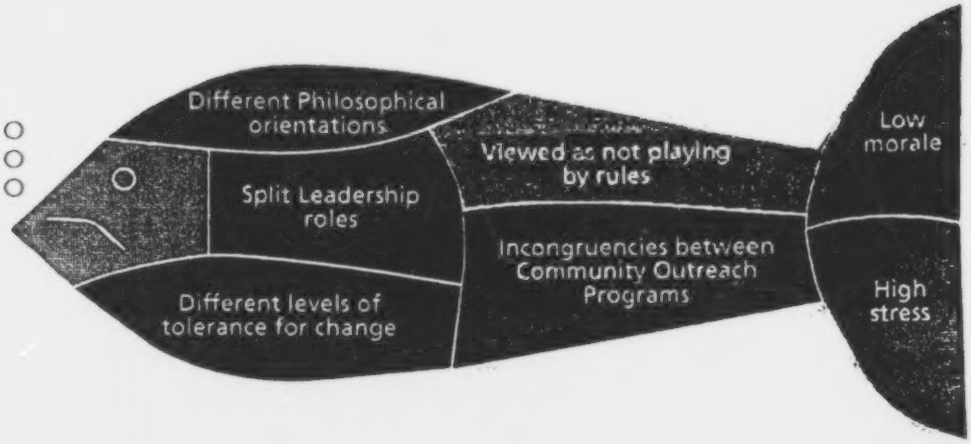
A Destiny technology teacher who attempted to identify or have a computer program developed additionally gave a technological spin to the intellectual quality dilemma as it manifests itself at Destiny:

> The curriculum at Destiny is so variant ... There is no continuity, no set pattern [which is good because we need that freedom] but we are asking computer-generated information management programs to do the impossible.

Thus, in matters of curriculum as well as in the many other areas highlighted, Destiny distinguishes itself as "a totally original school" whose lived school story, like its given story of school, is far from commonplace. As one of the first wave facilitator perceptively remarked, "We are ... a one-of-a-kinder—others can just look at us and sit and wish." At the same time, the school's designer story line makes it incredibly difficult for others in the comprehensive high schools and inside and outside of the school district to fathom that life at Destiny—with all of its "flashy features" and "bell and whistle advantages"—could ever possibly involve struggle.

BRIDGE II

Contrary to Destiny's story of school as interpreted through "the rainbow fish" lens, life at Destiny High School most definitely embodies struggles. The underside of the scales of the unique fish makes this point abundantly clear:


Different Philosophical orientations
Split Leadership roles
Different levels of tolerance for change
Viewed as not playing by rules
Incongruencies between Community Outreach Programs
Low morale
High stress

Having carefully sieved through Destiny High School's story of school and school story, I now return to Lydia Thomas' likening of Destiny's landscape to *The Rainbow Fish* tale which metaphorically provided rich insights into her developing knowledge of her school context and embodied a principal-initiated narrative practice (Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002) in action.

REVISITING LYDIA THOMAS AND *THE RAINBOW FISH*

When Lydia Thomas was appointed principal of Destiny High School, it became apparent to her and increasingly evident in the stories others shared with her that the campus was a "rainbow fish," a school that was innovatively a cut above the rest of the high schools in the school district pool. As Lydia pieced Destiny's storied landscape together, the graduated shades of its purple, blue, and green scales sharply came into view. Its story of school sparkled in comparison to others she had seen and experienced. By design, Destiny had stunning programs and spectacular features that clearly improved upon how youth were educated in mainstream high schools. From its high technology environment and service learning components to its integrated cubelike curriculum matrix and family groupings, Destiny had scales that outshone and out-circled the rest of the local institutions as well as other comprehensive high schools like them elsewhere in the state and the nation. At the same time, Lydia recognized that Destiny High School was an intensely sad place in which to work, as in-house data poignantly revealed. Its educators were highly stressed and school morale had bottomed out due to split administrative roles, conflicting values, and ultra strength meta-level reform initiatives, amid a plethora of other shaping forces. Also, the teachers were so intent on creating and living Destiny's

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innovative plot line that they had not shared their stories and developed relationships with others who were rightly perceived as envious and, in many cases, appeared rightfully justified in their envy.

With Lydia Thomas' wise counsel as an "administrator facilitator," Destiny High School's identity and worth, as well as the identities and worth of its teachers, became topics of a close investigation that became launched with *The Rainbow Fish* reading. Through a deliberate process of sustained reflection, the educators increased their capacity for happiness in the subsequent school year. The shift became quantitatively evident in the close to 70% increase on the school morale question. Furthermore, Destiny as a school context was able to begin to pay additional attention to other schools of fish in the district and in the reform movement as the school-generated references I have intentionally included in this account indicate. In this way, Destiny became more secure about its inward beauty and more able to confidently project its significant features outward. As Lydia Thomas succinctly put it, "when you know who you are within, then others on the outside can learn to be more accepting."

This none-too-soon development helped prepare Destiny for the enormous challenge of its lifetime, an impending danger a founding member drew to the facilitators' attention immediately following *The Rainbow Fish* reading in the initial faculty meeting I attended:

> There is a new high school being constructed . . . It is a major political issue about where they are going to build it, about its size, and what is going to happen to existing buildings. And it is important for us to think really hard about it because it has big implications for us and especially for Destiny.

It remains to be seen whether "the big, blue whale," the next high school making project in the school district series, will repeat the conventional plot lines of the two comprehensive campuses, will grow on the rainbow fish's goodness, or cast Destiny High School's designer story of school adrift as an unworkable, irrelevant fish in the burgeoning pool of national reform experiments. How the plot line of the new high school unravels will constitute a new sequel in Destiny's rainbow fish adventures and, in a very big way, influence not only Destiny's story line but its lifeline as well.

NOTES

1. The group of female educators who planned Destiny High School referred to one another—and were referred to by others—as "founding members."
2. See http://www.naschools.org/
3. A second New American Schools Development Corporation submission was denied funding in 2002.

4. Destiny was recognized as a Service Learning Lead School in a formal ceremony held at the White House in 2000.
5. Destiny is the only school in the United States that earned Coalition of Essential Schools membership in a two-year period.
6. Destiny High School students more recently have been organized into two multiage groups: one composed of grades 9–10 students; one made up of grades 11–12 students. This change arose in sustained conversations with Fred Newmann and his associates.
7. A memorandum of agreement was struck between the reform movement and Destiny's school district that allowed the small high school to use its reform funds to hire personnel. Yaeger, Hardy, and Eagle were not able to use their funds in this manner because their districts—for whatever reason (including not knowing that they could)—did not negotiate advance arrangements on their behalf.

CHAPTER 10

"THE RAINBOW FISH"

A Reflective Coda

In Chapter 9, "the rainbow fish" metaphor identified and explored by Lydia Thomas in association with the Destiny teachers was featured. Through unpacking the metaphor Thomas borrowed from children's literature, Destiny's story of school and school stories were analyzed. What follows is a reflective coda that highlights connections between principal knowledge, teacher knowledge, and school context.

PRINCIPAL KNOWLEDGE AND SCHOOL CONTEXT

As Lydia Thomas turned the silvery pages of *The Rainbow Fish* tale at the faculty meeting in the previous chapter, she put her inquiry as stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) perspective in motion within her new school context. Her tentative naming of the metaphor and her deliberate use of the flashy storybook drew attention to Destiny's breathtaking advantages *and* its sad state. *The Rainbow Fish* not only served to elegantly portray the tentative magnet of mind to which Lydia fixed her growing knowledge of Destiny, it also represented a narrative practice that she used to invite others—the Destiny teachers and me—to play "a believing game" (Elbow, 1986) with her and explore Destiny High School as "a rainbow fish," a "this feature and that" kind of school environment. Thomas' use of *The Rainbow Fish* was, for her and others, a discrete way to propel the individual and col-

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lective sense making along. It constituted both a method and a form to heighten shared knowledge use and generation.

When I arrived at Destiny High School, the milieu was as new to me (in the American setting[1]) as it earlier had been to Lydia. Lydia's metaphor fit well with the faculty members and panoramically portrayed Destiny's colorful landscape. The high-pitched drama of the school context appeared to have climaxed in the previous year and two of the main characters—the founding principal and the original curriculum specialist—were no longer on the scene, although the school district continued to form the institutional backdrop. In reality, only two artifacts remained. Both spoke volumes about the harrowing times: the survey results, which had plummeted below those of other district schools, and the after-the-fact stories that constantly seeped through, although the teachers wanted to transport their school context and themselves into the future. The teachers' individual and collective desire was to place the stressful chapter of Destiny's social narrative history behind them—to "enter a new phase," as one explained, "should anyone think less of us for having lived it."

When Lydia first introduced herself, she plucked narrative strands that built up to her becoming the principal of Destiny High School. Of her free will, she noted different features—different scales—that comprised Destiny's shiny features which I, in turn, captured on the rainbow fish sketches which bridged the different sections of the previous chapter. This storied material then became confirmed and expanded upon by others with whom I conducted informal discussions or open-ended interviews on the school landscape.

Lydia also explained how she engaged members of the faculty and Outreach Center in substantive conversations and tried to pull the "curious collection" of people and programs together with her principal story serving as the only common denominator. In her rendering, Lydia's personal plot line of an "administrator facilitator" rose to the fore. She clearly viewed herself as a person who, in the root meaning of facilitation, makes things *facile*—easy—for others. Thomas' constructivist world view not only hypothetically fit the scene to which she had been assigned; it was a part she played exceedingly well as the dramatically improved survey results indicated.

In Chapter 9, Lydia Thomas keenly illustrated how she went about facilitating the faculty's story telling. Realizing that the Destiny teachers had roughed particularly stormy seas and were experiencing difficulty restorying their situations, she initiated a lengthy inquiry into who they were and what made them good at what they do. Lydia connected with the teachers—individually and collectively—and developed a "clearer picture" of what had, and what was, going on at Destiny, as the facilitator who thought much deeper indicated. Lydia helped the teachers to name their individual and collective actions and inactions and the individual and collective actions and inactions of others. She shored up their sense of narrative authority (Olson, 1995) so they could better position themselves, their practices, and their school context with respect to future decision-making. She highlighted their considerable contributions as change agents—built up their resilience through story. Lydia knew they, as individuals and as a faculty, would more smoothly and satisfyingly navigate on and off their school landscape if they could enter into and sustain a shared narrative space—*out of which tangible, productive actions developed.* She furthermore recognized that "the chasm" between principal decision making and teacher thinking which had taken place at Destiny in previous years needed to be addressed. She wanted the decisions she carried forward to arise from and connect to the teacher inquiry that had taken place on the school landscape, not to be cut off—disassociated—from it in ways that exasperated the teachers. Both she and the teachers not only wanted to learn from, but break free of, that aspect of Destiny's plot line.

From the lived narratives shared with her, Lydia gleaned that the conventional story the former principal had lived did not bode well with the new stories of teaching and teaching stories that had evolved in a short space of time. Without a doubt, new stories of teachers and students demanded a new story of principal. When Thomas read *The Rainbow Fish* and employed the metaphor as a shared interpretive device to commence the full-blown inquiry, her personal living of a new administrator story naturally surfaced on the teachers' professional knowledge landscape. And no one scoffed or poked fun at the metaphorical connections Thomas intimated or at her regular practice of reading children's literature to adults, although it must have formed a sharp contrast to the interactions between the former Center principal and the facilitators in previous years.

TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE AND THE SHIFTING PROFESSIONAL LANDSCAPE

With no local model or lengthy school history on which to draw, Lydia relied heavily on her personal biography—that is, her background in reading, gifted and talented education, and constructivism—to see her through what could have been a tough situation. She also looked to the stories the teachers lived and fashioned her story as a response to theirs. This tact was vividly obvious when the teacher inquiry questions she framed patterned the essential questions the facilitators pursued in Exploratory Foundations classes with their students. Thomas intuitively knew that the successful approaches the teachers undertook with their students would also be productive and satisfying for her to employ in professional development deliberations with them.

In response, the teachers' attitudes shifted. The atmosphere of "little trust in administration and in the system" started to lift. It changed because Lydia Thomas "gathered information" and "took a whole semester to sit back and let us evaluate." As another facilitator indicated, she "did not tell us what we should think or do." Instead, she "focused on people getting their stuff together and helping us do it ourselves." A "wise, wise way" was how a third facilitator summed up Thomas' constructivist approach.

To Lydia and others (including those in out-of-school places), the Destiny facilitators' low rating of their school environment and their bottomed out morale constituted "an enormous cry for help." In Lydia's estimation, "topsy-turvy events" had taken place at Destiny of which only "muddy sense" could be made. Like the narratives of people who had survived traumatic life events (Mishler, 2000), the teachers' stories were bogged down in the replay of circumstances that had vexed and frustrated them.

This "spinning of wheels"—this "feeling of being stuck"—the educators experienced and openly acknowledged was a carryover from the tempest that had swirled in previous years on their professional knowledge landscape. The number and intensity of activities that had taken place during a short interval of time (which the scales on the first fish image amply convey) surely contributed to this sense of not knowing how to proceed. Additionally, the Destiny facilitators had to come to grips with what some termed "personality pathologies" (Destiny High School, 2002) and had worked extremely hard to establish a "made-from-scratch" story of school within the plot lines of a conventional school district.

But the Destiny facilitators additionally were dealing—in major ways—with ghosts, which unlike the ghosts in ancient plays, never made stage appearances on their professional knowledge landscape. In fact, at least three kinds of apparitions appeared to enter situations. One was the ghost of the comprehensive high schools in the district, the all-American story of high school Destiny was meant to improve upon. It roused significant guilt in the teachers because they did not want the distinction of being "the small high school that failed." Also, Destiny's facilitators were fully aware that they and their students were "inordinately blessed" in comparison to others with whom they competed and whom they bettered, although quantitative rankings were equally high in one case, but approaches and experiences qualitatively different. The angst associated with having the deck stacked in their favor weighed as heavily on them as the anger of not being favored disturbed others, both inside and outside the school district, on majority minority[2] *and* majority majority[3] campuses. Furthermore, the idea that the story of the American high school had been improved upon exclusively for their handpicked students and hand-selected selves—but that the public will did not exist to improve conditions for all students and teachers—was equally as problematic to them as it was to others, although people off the Destiny landscape obviously had not imagined this possibility.

Two was the ghost of the school district that, in their minds, incessantly peered over their shoulders. The teachers feared that the flow of small school thought and action which had been afforded them could just as easily be absorbed back into the mainstream school district—a consequence others envious of Destiny continually reinforced. Hardly a day passed at Destiny High School without mention of the school's tenuous relationship with the school district, although the school district never once signaled an alarm. Of course, warnings would not be necessary. Everyone instinctively knew, in a bred-in-your-bones (Crites, 1971) sort of way, the sacred story of how conduits based on hierarchy and power work.

The third ghost was an enormous shroud that lived inside the Destiny facilitators—the parts of them that attended comprehensive high schools as students, taught previously at such schools as student teachers and teachers, and had close colleagues or spouses who currently worked in them. Their thoughts and feelings concerning the education of their own children, the vast majority of whom attended large elementary schools, conventional middle schools, and one or the other of the district's comprehensive high schools additionally figured into situations. Whenever the teachers assumed hard line positions with respect to prevailing traditional practices (as they constantly felt obligated to do in order to justify Destiny's existence and their roles as facilitators), they simultaneously rejected portions of themselves, not to mention others—even their relatives—whom they held dear. Having identities anchored in change but created by tradition placed the teachers—individually and collectively—in perpetually taxing situations that needed to be worked through on an individual case basis. Because the tensions that arose needed to be overcome—scaled—again, again, and again, so, too, did the restorative narrative space need to be revisited—again, again, and again, both as individuals and as a community of colleagues on Destiny's professional knowledge landscape.

Although Destiny's designer story of school provided the facilitators with dazzling contextual features to which they could secure their personal stories, it did not—indeed, could not—supply the knowledge the facilitators needed to make sense of and thrive in the awe-inspiring environment that had been created with permission. Even though Destiny as a school context was unencumbered by shifting boiler plate tensions between its story of school and one or more stories of reform (readers will remember they were all the same at Destiny), its facilitators still experienced the fundamental human desire to refine meaning, not the least of which needed to be reconciled by individual educators as they moved between in-school and out-of-school places on their professional knowledge landscape.

TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE COMMUNITIES AND CURRICULUM PLANNING/MAKING

Destiny's teachers previously had not entered into inquiry spaces with their principal, but they had managed to create and nurture two important reflective spaces on their school's professional knowledge landscape to support student learning. One clearly came into view when a facilitator new to the faculty centered on what happens at Destiny High School on Tuesday mornings when students leave the campus to engage in their service learning projects. When the Destiny students "render service" in the community, the Destiny facilitators gathered to construct the Exploratory Foundations curriculum. As the new-to-campus teacher noted: "… it is not, we'll use the textbook and curriculum guides the district has for courses as in the other schools." Instead, she explained, "these are used as alignment, but the teachers bring together everything as a group and it is just phenomenal to me how they build it all together." This new-to-the-scene teacher's "phenomenal" assessment accurately portrayed the activities in which the two houses of teachers partook as they powerfully worked together, not only to plan and team teach curriculum, but to actively make (Connelly & Clandinin, 1992) it through dialogue, interaction, and an ongoing process of codification (Gudmundsdottir, 1991). Here, the idea of teachers' scholarship being developed and enhanced as it is produced on Destiny's professional landscape rises to the fore. Here, sustained spaces for teachers' knowledge community development have intentionally been included in a story of school. Here, teachers' knowledge—rather than the products created from and by it—is the force driving their scholarship.

A second knowledge community space also emerged at Destiny, one that is easy to skim over because students are central members: the family groupings. Elsewhere (Craig, 2002) I have written that family members, in a blood relative sense, can form part of students' knowledge communities. At Destiny, both teachers and support staff from all parts of the school context *and* other students gather in small, family like groups at the beginning and end of each day to story what has happened, to name issues with which students wrestle, and to share joint curricular experiences. These relational spaces seek out and strengthen "commonplaces of experiences" (Lane, 1988). The ongoing meetings provide opportunities for students with different interests ("the spider kids," "the jocks," "the cowboys") to learn to "commingle" and for students *and* adults to know students and be known by students in personal ways. It is little wonder, then, that Destiny's facilitators consider family the "backbone" of their school landscape in their written documents and "the most powerful tool for change" in their shared discussions. Furthermore, they are quick to set it apart from "homeroom" and "advisory period," terms typically associated with stories of comprehensive high schools. Family, as conceived and lived at Destiny, is about "caring people spending time together helping to make the Destiny High School experience meaningful both personally and academically." Family is about people in relationships having the potential to create and use knowledge over extended periods of time: the three to five years that students are enrolled in high school. Family is about possible knowledge communities composed of teachers and students being nurtured and thriving on the professional knowledge landscape of Destiny High School—not in spite of it.

NOTES

1. One of the high schools in the city where I resided in Canada belonged to the Coalition of Essential Schools Network. I had visited the campus a number of times and was familiar with the Coalition philosophy.
2. A majority minority school in the mid-southern state would be a campus in which the majority of students would be nonwhite, schools such as T. P. Yaeger Middle School, Hardy Academy, and Eagle High School, campuses featured in the three previous narrative inquiries.
3. A majority majority campus in the mid-southern state would be a campus like Destiny and other schools like it in the particular school district. The number of the students who attend these campuses would be predominantly white.

CHAPTER 11

TWO STORIED SCHOOL CONTEXTS

Influences on Principals' and Teachers' Knowledge

> *Stories reveal over and over again the precious and peculiar knack that humans have for triumph over travail.*
>
> —Estés (1993, p. 33)

In Part I of this book, I focused intently on teachers' storied metaphors constructed and reconstructed in the midst of unfolding experiences in reforming school contexts. In Part II, my attention shifted to the metaphors principals narrated as they worked alongside teachers in schools involved in organized reform efforts. I particularly followed the metaphoric sense making of Henry Richards at Eagle High School and Lydia Thomas at Destiny High School. Through examining the narratives they lived and told, and relived and retold, I hoped to unravel the complex relationships between and among stories of school, stories of reform, and teachers' experiences of organized school reform. I wanted to investigate what insights into principals' knowledge and teachers' knowledge Henry Richards' and Lydia Thomas' narratives lived and told over the continuum would offer. I wanted to tease out what their stories would reveal about their subtly nuanced contexts. I wanted to better understand the intersection of principals' stories and teachers' stories on shifting school landscapes.

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As I unearthed the social narrative histories of Eagle High School and Destiny High School, I illustrated, through the principals' stories reflecting their provisional knowing, how both Eagle and Destiny responded to a broad range of societal and educational concerns, all of which were deeply value laden, some of which revealed undirected change. Although both stories of school were intent on improving the prevailing model of the comprehensive high school, each, by virtue of the resources available to it, was going about it in a different way: Eagle, through drawing on its established story of school and introducing a new story of reform to it; Destiny, by returning to the beginning with a blank slate, although the sacred story (Crites, 1971) of the dominant high school model continued to cast a broad shadow on it in seen and unseen ways. Whereas Eagle had to contend with ongoing friction between its traditional story of a comprehensive school and its innovative story of reform (whose effect was diluted by conventional "interventions") Destiny's story of school and story of reform were so amazingly well aligned that no shifting plates of pressure grated against one another. Still, its school district which created it with great foresight, no external support, and slim chance of future funding, continued to operate, for all intents and purposes, as a conventional backdrop. Destiny's narrative additionally brings to the forefront a nearly invisible challenge to the relationship between teachers' knowledge and school reform: its double strength nature—in which the double-time intensity of the rate of change rather than the sources of change created disturbances in teachers' knowing and their relationships with others both on and off their professional knowledge landscape.

Although the stories of school and reform that the teachers experienced were very different at Eagle and Destiny, both were supported and suppressed to varying degrees by the school district conduits that produced and permitted them. At Eagle, the endorsed story of reform was allowed to flourish to the point at which it collided with a sacred story: the school district's press for test scores in the squalor of the state accountability system marketplace. At Destiny, a small school story of change was seeded at the very same time as two comprehensive high schools continued to exist largely unchanged in their plot lines. This arrangement caused Destiny to be both "adored and abhorred" in its school district—its landscape both "fascinated and irritated." What is glaringly apparent here is that the two school district conduits necessarily were concerned with stability—keeping things as they were (test scores, comprehensive high schools) at the very same time as they attempted to foster change (alternate stories of reform, alternate high schools). In both instances, these double turns held serious consequences for teachers' knowledge. What, on one hand, the teachers perceived as officially authorized and encouraged was, on the other hand, personally experienced not simply as mildly constraining, but heavily restrained. Thus, the institutional backdrops, to varying degrees, came across as diminishing schools' and educators' capacities for change at the same time that change miraculously was heralded and deliberately seeded.

Deeply buried in both of the principals' metaphorical hypotheses was the presence of fear: the fear of what potentially could happen as a consequence of the stories of reform not working out. At Eagle, the trepidation had to do with dissatisfying the accountability system dragon and educators not being allowed to continue to qualitatively change the school context—such things as student-teacher relationships, curriculum, and teachers' professional development—in ways that would make sense to their students' and their ways of knowing. At Destiny, the anxiety did not surround test scores—the campus was rated as exemplary[1]—but it was about becoming such a qualitatively different high school landscape—assuming such an utterly unique story of school—that the school and its facilitators could no longer identify with or be identified by companion high schools in the district, educators in other school contexts, or the school district itself. In fact, the independent school district phrase playfully tossed around at Eagle at one point in time could very well have applied to Destiny, too. However, what some viewed as Destiny's self-absorbed identity was only allowed to continue until the former principal stepped in, invoked her more conventional story and, in a manner consistent with her biography, brought the campus into line (at least as she perceived it) with the district. Her intervention, in a reverse sort of way, raised different "red flags" that, in turn, held repercussions for her.

At both Eagle and Destiny, the teachers and principals were expected to change, but only to the extent that the school districts bounding the educators' knowing could manage. Clearly, the Destiny educators had incredible creative license afforded them, particularly when their stories are laid alongside their Eagle counterparts. Still, that license was not without boundaries; it was not limitless, as they discovered—much to their chagrin. Whereas the Eagle educators could only stray as narrowly afield as the state accountability system bounding the school district conduit would permit, the Destiny facilitators could only maneuver within the parameters of what their negotiation—or lack of it—with school district officials and others would allow.

Both the Eagle and Destiny chapters portray principals charged with specific stories by their respective school district conduits. At Eagle, Henry Richards was supposed to maintain the academic excellence plot line while bringing the school demographics through an unprecedented socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial transition. At Destiny, Lydia Thomas was expected to build trust that had fallen to an all time low. In both cases, Henry and Lydia found themselves lodged between the institution of schooling and teachers who were its majority representatives. In both situations, the systems desired changes in teachers whereas teachers required changes in systems so that they could change in ways that made sense to them and would benefit their students. Positioned at the lip of the school/school district conduit and in the chaotic midst of conflicting stories, the expectations of Richards and Thomas were that they would perform two-way miracles: improve situations for teachers and students and keep those in the school district conduit pleased. So far, beginning principal Lydia Thomas has done a stunning job of maintaining this delicate balance. However, Henry Richards also fared extremely well until he faced the dragon's compromise and chose to leave Eagle rather than revoke the story of teachers and story of curriculum he and others worked relentlessly to create. Here, one wonders whether all principals at some point in their careers find themselves straddling between needs arising on their in-school landscapes and demands emanating from out-of-school places. Here, one hopes the new living of the story of school given Destiny will enable Lydia Thomas and the Destiny facilitators to continue to improvise a new story of "principal facilitator" that resonates with that small school landscape *and* meets the requirements of the school district. As for Henry Richards, we know his principal story is taking hold in more personally and institutionally satisfying ways on his new professional knowledge landscape several miles down the interstate highway. But we also are aware—as he is—that his continuing principal story is nested within the backdrop of what the narrative of his new school district will tolerate.

In both principal stories, we not only witness Henry and Lydia intuitively summoning metaphors to illuminate their embodied knowledge of the school contexts in which they work, we see them employing narrative knowledge in the everyday conduct of their administrative practices. Both principals turned to the power of metaphors to live by, not merely to make points in discussions, but to consciously address pernicious issues and to extend their own and others' knowledge development. For Henry, the perplexing dilemma was dealing with the school's ongoing struggle with accountability test scores while enlarging students' curricular experiences *and* not folding under practice testing pressures. For Lydia, the pressing issue was the ideal school environment in which something less-than-ideal had happened: teachers' personal and collective happiness had been winnowed away. Rather than approaching these tough matters head on, the principals storied and restoried their ways around and through them to draw teachers into dialogue about these critically significant topics without increasing stress levels. Henry continually voiced the grave importance of quantitative test scores to the continuation of innovative practices at Eagle and added to his and others' knowledge and experiences as he intuitively went about his day. He, the Eagle teachers, and other members of the reform movement were involved in a constant exchange of story—perpetual knowledge transactions—relating to that twisty issue. For Henry, "the dragon in school backyards" was an ongoing evolving tale and an intuitive approach that assisted him and others to make sense of what was going on in his and their in-school and out-of-school places. Lydia, on the other hand, was more intentional in her storied manner. In keeping with her personal biography, she mindfully selected an existing children's literature book, expressively read it, and enthusiastically invited response. In the end result, Lydia's practice accomplished for her at Destiny what Henry's did for him at Eagle. Both effectively communicated uneasy, potentially volatile topics in non-argumentative, publicly accessible ways. Both used narrative as a way to invite and extend conversations of critical importance. And the stories the principals told remained available to be revisited over and over again and revised and reinterpreted. Hence, others came to know their storied metaphors and language. And expressions associated with them had a ripple effect on their school landscapes—and other school landscapes—to which the accounts I have written graphically attest.

The last point I wish to highlight about Henry Richards and Lydia Thomas before we move on to the Grand Finale of this book has to do with the principal narratives they lived and told in context and their perceived relationships to teachers' knowledge development in community. Two key pieces of evidence emerged in Part II of this volume. At Eagle, Henry's awareness of the power of teachers working and learning together rose to the fore in what one teacher described as "the ring of protection he placed around us." Her point was further illustrated when the Eagle teachers planned the professional development days with Henry's permission and:

> Everyone kept saying: "I never knew teachers could be so supportive of one another. I never understood where we were going [with the reform movement]. But we physically acted out what we were doing. We *were* the pieces." It took a great deal of thought.

In the circle of protection comment and its elaboration, Henry Richards appeared to know that teachers possess special ways of working with one another which have highly positive consequences for students and their curricular experiences. He recognized that these knowledge-using and creating places are essential both to teacher professional development *and* student learning. Furthermore, when Eagle's test scores insignificantly dipped and the curriculum focus Henry Richards, Angela Hernández, and the teachers strived so hard to live did not bear immediate results in the means-ends way demanded, another teacher felt as sorrowful for Henry and Angela as she did for other teachers and herself. Here, readers see the high regard that teachers and administrators held for one another at Eagle—and what they—alone and together—were trying to accomplish in an inordinately complex set of circumstances. Here, neither blamed the other—the tempting thing to do—when the dragon regrettably attacked.

A second prime example appeared in the Destiny chapters. Readers see Lydia Thomas interacting with the facilitators who, by their and her admission, are "struck." But Thomas did not leave them to plow through the same material and resort to issuing an executive order based on her presumptions rather than their deliberations—which was the emergent administrative tradition on Destiny's landscape. Instead, she joined the investigation with them, and underscored key points using metaphorical incantations like "the rainbow fish" to discuss tough issues, to address hurt feelings, and to focus on positive actions that became documented in a record communicated to all. Wisdom, as indicated earlier, was how Thomas' way was interpreted.

In sum, two critical interchanges between principals and a number of teachers' knowledge communities and teacher knowledge community members occurred in Chapters 7–10. And both principals became involved in the highlighted situations by choice. Henry, in the first example, chose not to participate with a group of Eagle teachers working productively in community for the benefit of the Eagle school context and the stories available to students and themselves as professionals. On this occasion, he recognized the teachers' influence on one another was stronger without him than with him. And Lydia, in the second example, decided to get involved, to join the process, to walk alongside the teachers while mounting their collective "stuck" place. Taken together, both individuals model powerful stories of principals mindfully acknowledging and fruitfully engaging with teachers and teachers' knowledge communities. Both exemplify productive ways that principals and teachers interact to serve young adults' learning *and* teachers' professional growth on Eagle's and Destiny's professional knowledge landscapes. Both reveal how principals' and teachers' stories can complement one another—even as tensions associated with living stories of organized school reform swelled on their respective professional knowledge landscapes.

NOTE

1. Destiny has an established track record as an exemplary campus according to the prevailing state accountability system. Its statistical data, like that of Eagle, Yaeger, and Hardy, is available on a publicly accessible website.

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 12

GRAND FINALE I

> *Stories are powerful research tools. They provide us with a picture of real people in real situations, struggling with real problems. ... They invite us to speculate on what might be changed and with what effect. ... Most important, they invite us to remember that we are in the business of teaching, learning, and researching to improve the human condition.*
>
> —Noddings and Witherell (1991, p. 280)

T.P. Yaeger Middle School. Hardy Academy. Eagle High School. Destiny High School. Four storied landscapes. Four episodic struggles. Four nuanced metaphors. Four narrative inquiries of how stories of reform became lived.

In this book, two middle school and two high school landscapes were carefully examined through the metaphoric gazes of particular teachers and principals, informed by the narratives of numerous others. In the process, special attention was paid to the influences of context on teachers' knowledge developments and how different stories of organized reform became lived by educators when primacy was afforded the dynamics of their everyday school experiences. Now the spotlight will turn to a different matter: the train of meaning (Welty, 1984, p. 190) left in the wake of the four inquiries. I want to underline in bold ink several themes that transcend the inquiries and illuminate points of critical importance.

Narrative Inquiries of School Reform, pages 169–189
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THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL REFORM MOVEMENTS

In surveying what transpired at Yaeger, Hardy, Eagle, and Destiny—through the metaphoric lenses freely supplied by the teachers and principals—it becomes undisputedly clear that the introduction of any story of organized school reform to teachers' professional knowledge landscapes is not a discrete event as paper statements of the paradigmatic variety lead one to believe through their inattentiveness to lived experiences, the politics of what constitutes knowledge, the situations in which teachers find themselves, and the social historical contexts in which they work. In fact, the four narrative inquiries make crystal clear that any single story of change is connected to a whole myriad of shaping forces and a full spectrum of contributing events that include but are not limited to[1] the social narrative histories of schools, communities, and school districts, the nature of educational policies, the manner in which professional development is approached, and the biographical details educators individually and collectively bring to and take away from their teaching situations. These enormously complex experiences then become intimately interconnected, and the narratives arising from them painstakingly fashioned and molded by educators, frequently within their communities of knowing. To be certain, teachers enter into organized school reform situations in one state of mind and exit them in quite another. The question, as Dewey reminds us, is not whether this happens (Dewey, 1938). Of course, it does. It is human nature. It could not be otherwise. Rather, it is whether what experientially ensues in the *living* of organized school reform is educative or miseducative for them. My 'answer'—foreshadowed at the commencement of this book—is "it depends." The quagmire of contingencies present on school landscapes, the contextual influences that shaping forces have on educators, and the extent to which educators are able to shape the contextual influences on them, greatly dissolves any possibility of a universal case answer.

The common story of reform that played a role in all four narrative reconstructions forms a prime case in point. By now, readers are abundantly aware that it unfolded in fundamentally different ways at different intervals of time on each school landscape. At Yaeger, it provided an inquiry space, even though the teachers did not associate that space with the school's second story of reform and ironically used it to critique the school's first story of reform. At Hardy, it became the "high ideal" to which the teachers clung when they perceived their practices and their moral roles in children's lives potentially threatened. Meanwhile, the shared reform movement's influence at Eagle—specifically, its positive effects on teachers' professional development and teaching practices—gave rise to an amazing double entendre situation in which a statistically insignificant reduction in student scores, coupled with qualitative improvements to human relationships on the school landscape, led to the dragon-provoked ire of the school district descending on the principal and eventually the teachers. And at Destiny, the same reform movement—this time perfectly synchronized with the story of school *cum* existing stories of reform—also experienced success, but the price of purchase of that success was "ultra-strength" for some. Readers will recall that the felt tension at Destiny was not so much about a lack of resonance between the story of school and story/stories of reform (as it was in the other instances) but about the amount of change individual teachers can reasonably experience and act upon within given time frames. It also was affected by the school district conduit and the designer story of school—the conventional giver and the innovative given—reckoning, but not coming to mutually satisfying terms, with one another.

THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN AND AMONG STORIES OF REFORM, REFORM STORIES, AND THE CONDUIT

The conduit—which funnels "rhetorics of conclusions" onto practitioners' landscapes and creates epistemological dilemmas that teachers and principals live daily—manifested itself in a multitude of ways in the four narrative inquiries I crafted. These dilemmas had pedagogical, moral, ethical, political, professional, and personal origins and were embedded in the educators' lived experiences of school reform that unfolded in context.

In each case, it became vividly obvious that school reform movements and school reformers are lodged—just like everyone else[2]—in the conduit. They too uphold the sacred theory-practice story in spite of rhetoric and overtures to the contrary. How the different reform organizations and the agencies, representatives, and evaluators who acted on their behalf chose to position themselves on Yaeger's, Hardy's, Destiny's, and Eagle's landscapes greatly influenced the educators' situations within the reforming school contexts, shaping what and how knowledge became available to be known, underlining what should be of value. Even Missy's "not unreasonable" reform movement—the one that traversed all four sites—functioned as part of an enormously complicated conduit. That particular reform movement's sensitivity to teachers and their ways of knowing also was given; hence, it too could be taken away through changes in focus, personnel, and funding. Thus far, however, this possibility has not been realized.

In the first two narrative studies, two school reform conduits with radically different theories of action inadvertently worked at cross purposes at Yaeger and heated up to the point at which they sparred at Hardy. In both instances, those working on behalf of the funders were assumed to be acting on their intentions—although Howard Woodstock was quick to remind us that agendas can always be "switched out" not only by organizations, but by representative indivduals, and cover stories assumed. At the same time, it must be noted that philanthropy is not a neutral affair as the teachers in the Hardy teacher research group keenly brought to light. Philanthropy, as Lagemann explains it, is embroiled in the politics of knowledge and nested in the relationships between elites and the public at large (Lagemann, 1989, p. 329). Different philanthropic efforts—with different theories of action—reflect different plot lines of how different elites wish to interact in the public sphere. Not surprisingly then, their interests and desires vary. Hence, they, too, shape teachers' professional knowledge landscapes in a variety of ways, some of which conflict with others. And, as Howard at Yaeger once again knowingly observed, school-based educators find themselves at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to figuring out underlying purposes, particularly when commitments have already been made on their behalf and significant sums of "open-ended" soft money have been proffered and accepted by individuals positioned above them in a hierarchy of rank and power.

At Eagle High School, the common school reform conduit appeared to render a positive effect on that school landscape. However, its influence disturbed the school district conduit, which paradoxically had sanctioned the reform conduit's presence in the first place. Also, the state accountability conduit and the Department of Justice conduit played contributing roles in the upheaval. Both peripherally shaped the responses of those acting on behalf of the school district conduit and assisted in undercutting the "intellectual quality" agenda the Eagle educators pursued for their school's diverse student population. In this instance, as in the majority of others (except the Hardy one already indicated), no communications between the multiple manifestations of the conduit appeared to take place. Hence, a proliferation of conflicting moral messages and differing prescriptions for action simultaneously rained down on teachers who grappled on the receiving end to make sense of blatant discrepancies that one teacher summed up as simply "bizarre."

Where Destiny High School was concerned, its conduit was different, but extremely complex as well. Readers will recall that Destiny was developed "with a free hand." As one of the educators put it, the facilitators had "been allowed to [design] it by [themselves]." However, like the stories of the other three campuses, its experimental nature was permitted. Destiny's situation increasingly became convoluted when the faculty became lonely, and the school, with district support, became involved with The Coalition of Essential Schools conduit. Then Destiny joined another East Coast reform project, a second school reform conduit, when it arrived on the local scene. As time wore on, it became patently obvious that Destiny's innovative story of school and lived stories understandably did not fit within the margins of acceptable stories lived and told by the conventional high school campuses and educators nor within the boundaries set by district policies and procedures. Furthermore, the built-in competition between the established story of the conventional high schools and Destiny's small story of school brewed. In the end result, part of the school district conduit devotedly "shepherded, protected, and enhanced" Destiny's development at the same time as other strands in that same pipeline gave the Destiny facilitators grief. Among the latter strands I include a manifestation of the conduit rarely seen: educators in other school's contexts and programs who articulated "feelings of jealousy," envied Destiny's privileged status, and outlined what the Destiny facilitators ought to do about it.

Not surprisingly, teachers on all four school landscapes became increasingly bothered by their interactions with the conduit in its multiple forms. Readers will recall that Bob Henderson focused on the enormous angst the Yaeger teachers experienced in his monkey telling. Kaye, at Hardy, similarly questioned the motives underlying "bled dry" teachers. Meanwhile, the Eagle and Destiny educators experienced escalating tensions in their respective schools' relations with their district conduits. Although Eagle's and Destiny's compositions and concerns were vastly different, the underlying sources of their stress could be reduced to the same root: issues of power and control in authoring stories of school and stories of reform. In a nutshell, the educators peopling the school landscapes were desirous of carving their own plot lines whereas those in positions of power in out-of-school places tended to approach the school landscapes *and* the educators in generalizable, bureaucratic, hierarchical ways (Hollingsworth & Sockett, 1994).

Yaeger's Bob Henderson searched for words to identify the "something much bigger" he recognized as laying behind the turbulence and tribulation educators experienced on his landscape. Hardy's Anna, Kaye, Marla, and Genieve also thought long and hard about matters that weighed heavy on their school context. And the Eagle and Destiny educators experienced enormous struggles—even publicly shed tears—relating to their campus' shifting stories of school/stories of reform. So what was it about the interface of the various school reform conduits and the school district conduits that so disturbed the school-based educators that they could not even find words to wrap around their unsetting experiences?

In the top-down approach to curriculum integration at Yaeger, the industry-sponsored integration effort at Hardy, the school district/state accountability system's breathing of fire at Eagle, and the unhappy school syndrome experienced at Destiny, imperatives and information flowed through a multifaceted conduit in which people lodged in a hierarchy of knowledge and position attempted to work on the educators in the schools, despite the fact the teachers and principals were minded professionals. And like water, the one-way, canonical imperatives dripped down on them, declaring what they ought to know and do, while their less-than-satisfying human experiences about what they were *knowing* and *doing* did not have a legitimate space in which to flow up. Furthermore, when their experiences eventually did become known, the news spread through highly unsatisfactory means. For example, external evaluators identified the lack of prime time assigned Hardy's industry-sponsored science effort and "disparagingly" assessed the educators' practices at Yaeger. Meanwhile, school district officials intervened at Eagle in a manner some interpreted as "professionally intrusive." And, at Destiny, the campus' high stress levels and poor school morale became known through anonymous survey results, which lost any semblance of anonymity when scores fell to an all time low. These difficult situations developed in spite of the fact the teachers knew, as Charles Wright at Yaeger distinctly pointed out, that "markers on the road" existed and that feedback could have been fed into out-of-school loops "along the way" rather than exposed in stripped-from-context kinds of ways at critical evaluative points. While such approaches do much to secure the privileged positions of evaluators and their instruments (in numeric, graphic, and verbal forms) in the conduit, they foster unproductive blaming—damaging to school landscapes and hurtful to individuals—which greatly detracts from educators' and campuses' willingness to participate in future stories of reform and reinforces rather than re-imagines the theory–practice split.

In Yaeger's and Hardy's out-of-balance reform situations, the teachers turned their attentions away from the paradigmatic substance of what they were supposed to do (write integrated lessons revolving around models of teaching in the case of Yaeger and industry-integrated science in the case of Hardy) and fixed their eyes on its value to their narrative ways of knowing and the extent to which they were pleased with what they were *doing*. Their concerns had to do with the extent to which their face-to-face instruction of students was enhanced and whether or not their knowing of themselves, their situations, their students, their curriculum, and school contexts had increased. And in the absence of healthy theory-practice relationships—that is, relationships that respected teachers as knowers and doers—potentially good things associated with the stories of reform also were swept away.

In Eagle's and Destiny's reform situation, something different unfolded. At Eagle, readers will recall, the school district pipeline asserted its primacy, invoked its power, and attempted to snuff out the influence of the school reform conduit. Yet Henry Richards intuitively knew that Eagle's reform story would go underground—in spite of the intense scrutiny and visible restraints placed on teachers' practices. He astutely recognized, as Schwab did, that

> . . . teachers will not and cannot be merely told what to do . . . subject specialists have tried it . . . administrators have tried it . . . legislators have tried it . . . teachers are not assembly line workers, and will not behave so. . . . (Schwab, 1983, p. 245)

And at Destiny, the disturbances within that school context took the form of leadership issues and how a designer story of school (and the stories of teachers and students implied by it) finds its place alongside campuses, educators, and students enacting conventional story lines. Destiny's "tough times," readers will furthermore remember, resulted in dislocation (departure of the founding principal and later, the curriculum specialist), redefinition (changes in the administrator's role and time), and eventually to Lydia Thomas' employment and the trust-building story she was given.

THE INFLUENCE OF STORIES OF REFORM ON TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES AND KNOWLEDGE

On the four campuses where I lived amid different constellations of stories, some teachers and their knowledge were given increased attention through participation in stories of organized school reform and other teachers and their knowledge were not. At Yaeger, readers will recall that twelve, then twenty, teachers initially were singled out to lead the models of teaching effort. They fretted over why they were chosen while their sixty-five colleagues panicked over why they were not. At Hardy, another thing similar to Yaeger happened. The mega-industry award specifically was earmarked for the science magnet theme and principally the handful of science teachers in the school. This arrangement left the remaining faculty members "tagging along"—following the lead of their more privileged colleagues, some who appeared to buckle under the work, responsibility, and stress that the heightened attention "gifted" them.

At Destiny, not some but all of its faculty members, by virtue of the exclusive story bestowed upon that school landscape, were placed in a hot house situation and provided with special conditions. That circumstance resulted not so much in in-school strife (although there obviously were different levels of tolerance for change and ghosts that passed through situations), but uneasy relationships with educators off the school landscape—on other campuses and in the school district office. In this instance, a new entailment associated with targeting some teachers, some school programs, and some school contexts rises to the fore. School reform privileging of the whole school variety profoundly affects teachers' identities *and* schools' relationships with the world (Wenger, 1998, p. 130). Destiny's sad state of affairs—prior to Lydia's arrival on that scene—strongly makes this case.

One more comment concerning the increased attention given particular educators and schools bears mention. Eagle will form the example but the matter applies to all four storied school landscapes. Thus far, I have confined my comments to what happens when some teachers and some school contexts are given a special "treatment," a specific story/stories of reform, and awarded funds beyond what is available to others in public school environments. However, another kind of increased attention associated with stories of organized school reform goes on as well. That variety occurs by natural selection; that is, by virtue of the free will choices teachers make as to whether or not they will participate in stories of reform. This twisty dilemma was described well by Eagle High School's Angela Hernández who ably reflected on the positive participation of teachers in the living of the reform story on that particular campus. I paraphrase what a teacher gleaned from Hernández' sense making: "Those teachers who put a great deal into it got a great deal out of it." According to the teacher, Hernández went on to explain that the Eagle teachers who did not engage in the story held no possibility of reaping benefits. Angela Hernández reminds us that gulfs between and among teachers' knowledge not only result from ill-conceived plans of reformers, ill-timed sequences of events on drastically shifting school landscapes, and social change that simply cannot be predicted, they paradoxically also can be a consequence of the self-initiated choices individual teachers make. This latter observation tangentially connects with the Yaeger situation in which some teachers became conversant in the language of the first story of reform (but not, in that case, through choices of their own) whereas others remained outside the first story of reform (also not through personal choice) and the particular language continued to be unavailable to them.

THE ELABORATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE LANDSCAPE CONCEPTUALIZATION

Through narratively reconstructing educators' fine-grained knowledge in four school contexts, this work elaborated and extended Clandinin and Connelly's professional knowledge landscape metaphor and directly connected it with teachers' reform experiences. Furthermore, the approach was employed in an American (rather than a Canadian) context in two middle schools and two high schools, three of which were peopled by mostly minority students. Not only was the national backdrop different to the previous research that has been conducted, so, too, was the local history different—even among the particular schools featured in the narrative inquiries. And the teachers and the principals participating in the research studies reflected to a certain degree the diversity present in the major urban center. This combination brought new perspectives to bear on the particular line of inquiry.

Through the use of two new storied pairs: stories of communities—community stories and stories of reform—reform stories, I more tangibly was able to convey what transpired in classrooms and schools with the social narrative histories of communities and the theories of action underlying particular stories of reform and how they became lived. At the same time, teachers' reflections and actions with and on behalf of their students were more clearly identified and racial and cultural influences on teachers' and principals' knowledge developments were taken into consideration. And teachers' knowledge communities were lifted up and set within the broader horizon of doing, living, and knowing school reform.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE COMMUNITIES

In this volume, teachers' knowledge communities especially stand out as immensely powerful phenomena that can strengthen or squelch stories of organized school reform. At Yaeger, I demonstrated teachers using their minds well in community with one another and to what some would story as the demise of the 'models of teaching' reform which operated through a one way (I talk/You listen) training transmission. And at Hardy, I showed a core group of teachers working in community, influencing their principal, and coming to grips with a major societal force—with their children's futures and their professionalism hanging by a thread. At Eagle and Destiny, I was less pointed in my discussions of teachers' knowledge communities but powerful evidence was integrated throughout the accounts. At Eagle, for example, the teacher who graphically described how she figured out the existence of a "new house" in the company of her inquiry group members and the second teacher who planned the professional development day, received important feedback from her peers, and concluded "we are the pieces," both demonstrated the power of teachers' knowledge communities in the living of reform stories. At Destiny, I highlighted what took place in the teachers' curriculum making sessions through the fresh eyes of a teacher new to that campus. I also told of teacher-student and student-student knowledge communities[3] that developed within the family groups maintained over the successive years of students' enrollments. Also, readers will recall that family specifically was identified in the sustained "rainbow fish" inquiry as the most powerful harbinger of change in that campus' lived story. Through sharing experiences, playing games, and dialoguing about issues related to core curriculum at the beginning and end of each school day, students and teachers developed meanings in ways that enabled knowers to know and to become known. Here, the hallmark of what happens in knowledge communities nurtured in a small school environment shines through. Here, the reciprocity of adults and young adults interacting in teacher–student knowledge building relationships demonstrates their value both to lives lived and stories available to be lived. Here, the lifeblood of what pedagogical relationships are all about becomes visible, tangible, palpable.

In the Yaeger and Hardy cases, readers additionally catch glimpses of teachers navigating within *and* across knowledge communities. We particularly see these interactions when the different reading teachers at Yaeger took counsel with their teaching team partners as well as their subject area colleagues. Three of the reading teachers intentionally consulted with Howard Woodstock who concurrently ran things by them. Howard, we know, brought a cultural reading to bear that others desired but could not bring to fruition—if it were not for Howard and the intentional role he played for teachers and students on Yaeger's professional knowledge landscape. And at Hardy, readers will remember Missy Ibarra who purposely attended the school reform meeting, then took her story of experience of it to at least two knowledge communities for feedback: one with Harriet Anderson (which threaded back to Hardy's opening) and another with her science colleagues (that revolved around a shared content area, a reform project gone awry, and its perceived negative impact on a colleague's personal life). These two examples depict how teachers' knowledge communities have the potential to interact as a generative web of nested communities on school landscapes with dynamic interplay among them and potential overlap between them. They also show how individuals like Howard and Missy crossed borders—carried narratives of experience and their multistoried interpretations from one community to another—as sense was made of uneasy situations that developed on their respective professional knowledge landscapes.

I, as a researcher, interacted in the school contexts much like Howard and Missy did. I harvested stories with the educators—teachers and principals alike—through entering into multiple communities of knowing and building and sustaining relationships over time. But I also cut across knowledge communities to collect different readings of experience and to check whether narratives gathered in one place resonated with stories offered in another. Particular examples of this relational pattern stand out in the Hardy narrative in which the interviews conducted with Missy Ibarra were painstakingly reviewed to see if the storied details aligned with the transcripts of passing conversations and interviews undertaken with Harriet Anderson. A second visibly apparent example is when some of the people I interviewed at Destiny named four founding members, others spoke of five, and still others listed six. I included all six in the research account; however, careful readers can easily return to that inquiry and reduce the number of individuals from six to five to four by sifting through the details I offered.

All in all, I worked with a large number of school-based people who spanned multiple knowledge communities in order to broadly authenticate lived stories and storied lives. But I also interacted intensively with a few people with whom I constantly checked, not only with respect to field notes, but also in regard to research texts, and finally as drafts gave way to research stories and manuscripts. And I frequently surprised research participants by telephoning, e-mailing, or visiting them months or even a year later to confirm details that might be considered trivial or inconsequential to anyone but me—and others keenly interested in reinscribing the meaning of validity and reliability in research studies and reporting.

INFLUENCES OF SOCIAL NARRATIVE HISTORIES ON SCHOOL CONTEXTS

In each of the narrative inquiries, I juxtaposed a matrix of stories to provide different insights into the four school landscapes. The story constellations approach grounded the teachers' lived experiences in the ongoing social narrative histories of their school landscapes, a dimension frequently not included in accounts of school change. In some instances in the four inquiries, the tendency to wipe clean traces of the past resulted in a loss of local history. In other examples, particular dimensions of school and reform histories were overlooked. And in further cases, neither the history of the locale nor the history of school reform was carefully taken into account.

The desire to clear the historical slate appeared in at least three major ways in the four narrative inquiries. At Hardy, the school's former story of an Alternate Behavior Campus and the alleged removal of historical artifacts from its partner high school demonstrated local history, school history, and school reform history being erased. Deeply rooted plot lines lived in one era were intentionally discarded, but not fully eliminated, in another. A similar kind of loss was evident at Yaeger as well. Readers will remember that earlier commitments to hire diverse faculty members had receded and Harold Woodstock found himself one of two African American males rather than one of nine males when desegregation policies first were enacted. And Destiny's story of a small high school, which encompassed its two stories of reform—and compounded its effect—bore no traces of its comprehensive high school predecessor. This absence of history made it difficult for the campus and its teachers to settle into everyday district life, particularly when the aura of the new landscape began to wear off in the shaping and being shaped process occurring amid an imbalance of power. It also gave rise to ghosts that passed through situations, which constantly reminded the facilitators of the power of tradition, the possibility of failure, and the presence of privilege. And it led to dismal isolation and abject loneliness quantitatively reflected in the survey and remedied by "the rainbow fish" deliberations.

Back to Yaeger, school history and school reform history additionally were not paid mindful attention. Charles Wright, we recall, realized the new story of integrated curriculum reform that Yaeger had been given brought with it implications for his story as a teacher that were not as forward moving as the plot line he currently lived. And an additional thing about Destiny stands out: that school's innovative curriculum matrix appeared detached from the curriculum history that had produced it. The cubelike design uncannily resembled Forshay's (2000) scholarship but no known connections could be verified—other than the likely possibility that the matrix was carried to the school and adapted through work with consultants.

Another historical entailment of critical importance to understanding the interface of stories of school and stories of reform and their influence on teachers' knowledge additionally warrants mention at this time. The matter specifically pertains to the common notion of students as workers. At Destiny, the expression, students as workers, was used often and in a taken-for-granted, unproblematic manner. At Hardy, however, the mere thought appeared to dredge up a totally different image for some individuals lodged in that situation. Simply put, it called forth a different history. A quick sweep of Destiny's and Hardy's social narrative backdrops offers penetrating insights as to why the idea of students as workers could be unanimously accepted in an untroubled way in one school context and viewed with caution, even suspicion, in another. Furthermore, it offers a possible explanation why a community leader driving by Hardy voiced exception to African American males (coincidentally the first individuals who completed their classroom assignments) hoeing the school's environmental space. His position was that females and males of all races should be engaged in the outdoor activity. The splendid center of learning, it seems, did not—at least for him—conceal the conflicted past that brought the magnet story of school into existence.

INFLUENCES ON CURRICULUM

Although my entry points into discussion in this book clearly are teachers, their knowledge, school contexts, and the influence of organized school reform, curriculum implications related to particular stories of reform rose to the fore at every juncture of the research journey. This is yet another situation that could not be otherwise. After all, teachers, through their knowledge expressed in practice and in context, *are* curriculum makers. What they say and do not only reveals their personal practical knowledge in motion, it makes visible their curriculum making in action. What teachers reflect on, build theories about, view as significant, negotiate meanings for, and act upon all necessarily inform their curricular exchanges with students. Simply put, curriculum is not merely the documents mandated of them, the staff developers put before them, or the expert knowledge made available to them—as it often is spelled out in reform proposals and all-too-frequently accounted by evaluators caught up in the authority of power and position the conduit invests in them.[4] As Clandinin and Connelly (1998) astutely remind us:

> knowledge [involves] . . . much more as well . . . In truth, teachers and others can learn new knowledge and accumulate it as personal attribute but still not change the way they "know" their classrooms, their schools, their children, their colleagues, and their professional lives. (pp. 156–157)

In other words, teachers can be fully "trained" on an intellectual level, yet not be able to put that knowledge as attribute into action. Narrative understandings of how to embody knowledge as attribute in existing practices and embed it in contextual complexities need to be reached.

As a researcher with a strong curriculum background, I initially was shocked and dismayed to discover that attempts to integrate curriculum—first at Yaeger, then at Hardy—were not only unproductive, but also highly frustrating to teachers. In the aftermath of the two reform efforts in the two distinctly different contexts, the major sticking points became readily apparent to me: training and codification. In my estimation, both matters were deeply entangled in teacher knowledge considerations.

I need not return to the Yaeger and Hardy stories to remind readers of how enormously offensive the training mindset[5] is when it is procedurally applied to those living stories as professional educators. I believe I established what the teachers experienced as infringements on their professionalism in the respective chapters. I also emphasized the horrendous difficulties that arose when teachers were morally pushed to write mandated lesson plans, not for personal and collective knowledge development, but as reifications to prove their knowledge to others and "rhetorics of conclusions" to foist on still others. And at Hardy, a subsidiary challenge emerged: it had been suggested that teachers' lesson plans—part of their scholarship—would be sold for profit, and the beneficiaries appeared not to be students, community members, the school district or themselves. One only needs to recall Dewey's observation uttered more than eight decades ago to realize that conduits working in unabashedly prescriptive ways are exorbitantly problematic. To quote Dewey (1916):

> Why is it ... that teaching by pouring in [and] learning by passive absorption... are universally condemned, [but] still entrenched in practice? Education is not an affair of "telling" and being told, but an active and constructive process that is a principle almost as generally violated in practice as conceded in theory. (p. 38)

Rather than rehashing the sordid details of the particular stories of integrated curriculum reform that unraveled in contrary ways for the Yaeger and Hardy teachers and have unraveled contrarily for teachers throughout the history of school reform, I want to center on two stories of curricular change that, for the most part, went enormously right: the one at Eagle and the one at Destiny.

At Eagle, readers witness vigorous attention devoted to the quality of students' curricular experiences, the intentional building of a culturally relevant context within which diverse students could learn and develop healthy identities, venue and voice given to parents and community members, and the collaborative manner in which teacher professional development was approached. Then, too, a "circle of protection" was placed around teachers' work, the principal deliberately chose not to treat the teachers in a "perfunctory manner," and the teachers figured out that they were the pieces of the school reform puzzle—that they—not written documents, training techniques, visiting experts or testing instruments—were "the conduits entrusted daily with bringing curriculum to life in their classrooms" (Olson, 2000, p. 171). However, readers also are acutely aware that this immensely important growth at Eagle—and the high esteem in which it was held—was not enough to ward off a dragon attack precipitated by numerous converging factors, one being the district's single-minded focus on test scores (reinforced by the state accountability system conduit, the Department of Justice conduit, and public demand) and another being socioeconomic deterioration to which the educators and their school district could only react. Nevertheless, the Eagle context sets a positive course, attempts to stay it, and shows critical progress taking place in an environment of unprecedented educational control and unparalleled societal change that in no way, shape, or form smacks of privilege.

Moving on, I turn to the highly positive curriculum implications arising from the narrative inquiry conducted at Destiny. I again center on the teachers' Tuesday planning sessions. This time, I expand on their curricular value. Not only did the teachers share useful narrative knowledge about their practices, their students, and their school context in these regular morning meetings, they brought "narrative readings" (Olson, 2000, p. 183) to bear on the conventional curriculum documents available for their use. Through employing these narrative readings, they "transformed" knowledge from the disciplines into a form that could be "played out in the time and space of classrooms" (Carter, 1993, p. 7). Furthermore, they used a variety of other sources as "story starters" that enabled "their own and their students' lived curriculum stories ... to come to life" (Olson, 2000, p. 183). The integrated approach gave rise to Exploratory Foundations courses that neither were attributable to the scholarship of individual teachers nor to any single resource book the facilitators had at their disposal. Rather, Exploratory Foundations as a course of study and Exploratory Foundations as a narrative idea shaped and reshaped by individuals' experience became fused in important ways. Furthermore, the material remained available for future examination and interpretation with present teachers' and students' lived experiences informing new tellings spun off of old ones (Conle, 1999, p. 22).

What I have described in relation to the teachers' curriculum making sessions at Destiny similarly applied to family group meetings, although these developed in less structured, more conversational ways. Because there was no codified family curriculum document—a controversial matter, readers will recall—what unfolded in the families largely followed the narrative impulse of group members. Hence, great diversity was apparent in the core-related curricular activities undertaken and what was deemed important at different times. As a result, students and teachers developed an affinity for how lives were lived and told in particular families and expressed fidelity to family members. The value of family groupings additionally spilled over to students "engaged in learning ... and taking responsibility for their learning" and bolstered their abilities to work "without a teacher sitting over them, without an eye on them all the time." In short, new curriculum stories—lived and told by teachers—birthed new learning stories—lived and told by students.

EPISTEMOLOGIES OF TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE AND SCHOOL REFORM

In this book, epistemology undergirded the different stories of school/stories of reform situations set within the respective institutional backdrops. In fact, each narrative investigation did not suggest a single epistemology but a whole swarm of nested, interacting epistemologies (Lyons, 1990)—those of teachers and principals individually and collectively, schools as institutions, and reform movements as subsidiary organizations promoting change. And these epistemologies played off of one another, rarely in consonant fashions.

In each narrative inquiry, readers experienced individual school districts and reform movements enacting unique organizational modes of knowing. The epistemology of the school district to which Hardy and Eagle belonged, for example, was noticeably different to the one of which Destiny was a part. At the same time, the particular school district's mode of knowing in the Hardy account matched its way of being in the Eagle account. Kaye's query about "bled dry" people, for example, fit with Henry's concerns about the "suck out of you its life" dragon. Meanwhile, the epistemology of Yaeger's institutional backdrop was more elusive. Its non-participation—indeed, its total lack of presence—suggested selective institutional "not knowing" as a preferred epistemological stance. As readers can well imagine, this organizational outlook also can present challenges. Where Yaeger was concerned, its situation became further complicated by state agency representatives who capitalized on the lack of district participation and boldly stepped in with "I speak/you listen" ways of knowing—yet another epistemology—to provide direction to and assessment of Yaeger's principal and teachers (and, through not-so-subtle implication, the school district). To further complicate the mix, the agency's epistemic stance, appeared perplexingly incommensurate with the funder's long history of championing teachers and their professionalism.

In addition to the organizational epistemologies to which I have alluded, different epistemological positions underpinned the specific stories of reform introduced through multiple theories of action to the different school contexts. Yaeger's model of teaching reform hinged on the replication of teaching models demonstrated by an expert whereas Hardy's integrated science effort sought to transfer updated content knowledge to practitioners. In both cases, the sacred view of knowledge as "something that persons *have* and can take from one setting to another" (Putnam & Borko, 2000, p. 12) appeared to prevail. In both instances, teachers' narrative ways of knowing went underground. In both inquiries, that knowledge simmered, eventually bubbling over and becoming known and expressed within each campus' *second* story of reform, a story of reform that more readily blended with teachers' ways of knowing.

At Eagle, teachers demonstrated, through keenly perspective narrative reconstructions, profound insights into how change was taking shape on their campus—even amid the disastrous dragon encounter. Readers especially will remember the teacher who spoke with exhilaration and fear about "...the new house ... [representing] the construction of a new framework..." But her and others' deeply reflective analysis of what was taking shape on that campus was antithetical to the technical rationalist stance embedded in the state's accountability system and the means-ends expectations to which the school district held the campus—and others held the school district—accountable. The latter's panic attack, readers again will remember, brought the epistemological dilemma that provoked the dragon's anger to a head. The dissonance apparent in the different views of knowledge and different theories of action especially can be heard in Henry Richards' poignant announcement that:

> . . . a very prescriptive way is coming down the tubes . . . The parameters have been well defined to me . . . Our reform programs are under review . . . The translation of smart teachers into smart students has not taken place in the manner expected.

Here, word choices like "prescriptive," "parameters," "well-defined," and "translation" signal more than a program "review": they speak in powerful ways to the triumph of the prevailing organizational epistemology.

Where Destiny was concerned, increased acknowledgment of and spaces for teachers' narrative expressions of knowledge were intentionally built into its designer story of school, which was largely authored by teachers in close relationship with a district official. These spaces were abundantly evident in the inquiry-driven faculty meetings, the conversational nature of Tuesday morning curriculum planning sessions, and the manner in which family activities unfolded daily. Yet, other situations where the school interfaced with its district suggested that different modes of institutional knowing also were at work. For example, when the one-of-a-kind story of school ran amok with school district policies and procedures and stories of educators on other campuses—as its innovative nature was inclined/designed to do—different views about what was most important and valued sat at the core of the struggles. Readers furthermore will recall that it was precisely these eye-of-the-storm dilemmas that caused the Destiny educators' high stress and low morale levels to soar.

Those pontificating about the extent to which school reform efforts fall short of the desired mark and dissatisfied with successes of modest proportions need only to review the inordinate number of epistemologically challenging dilemmas that the teachers at Yaeger, Hardy, Eagle, and Destiny faced in the daily conduct of their work to comprehend the deep and abiding gaps created by multiple reform agendas often poured indiscriminately into schools (bounded by unique district contexts, each shaped differently by educational policy) and the great void that exists between what ought to be happening with respect to school reform—as conceived and defined by those in out-of-school places—and what actually is happening—as experienced and known by educators in in-school places. Those committed to addressing the situation might seriously embrace school reform as a narrative construction—ultimately concerned with human beings, their relationships, and their activities—and approach it in epistemological terms—a matter of what, how, and under what conditions people come to know—within which the development of teachers' knowledge and their communities of knowing is pivotal and therefore paramount to school reform "success" and "student achievement."

JUSTIFICATION OF TEACHER KNOWLEDGE

Although John Dewey some decades ago was optimistic that "education … as an active process … is a principle … conceded in theory," I am less so. Among other things (including the question of whether a knowledge base for teaching exists as currently conceived [Carter, 1993]), the justification of teachers' knowledge—a linchpin piece in that active process of construction—remains a highly disputed matter. And Dewey's groundbreaking view of teachers as minded professionals sits squarely at the heart of the deep and debatable concerns.

In 1994, Fenstermacher, in a highly regarded review of teacher knowledge research programs, advised researchers pursuing teacher-related inquiries to concentrate their efforts on the nature of teacher knowledge in order to influence educational decision-making (Fenstermacher, 1994, p. 5). Although sympathetic to the three teacher practical knowledge strands (largely grouped as Clandinin & Connelly, 1985; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990; and Munby & Russell, 1992), he reminded researchers conducting studies in the particular niche of a prevailing sacred story: that educational policy finds its foundations in science and that science turns to epistemology to validate knowledge claims. He furthermore challenged teacher knowledge researchers to issue "proof" of the existence of practical knowledge (narrative knowledge, in Bruner's terms) in a manner parallel to how formal knowledge (paradigmatic knowledge, in Bruner's terms) has been justified and thereby afforded privileged status. In Bok's borrowed words, Fenstermacher's analysis clearly demonstrated that "in philosophy, as elsewhere, professionalization [has produced] a vocabulary, a theoretical apparatus, and academic boundaries forbidding to outsiders and confining to those within" (Bok, 1989, p. xx).

The issues fermenting for some time in the teacher knowledge field sparked a vigorous response. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) boldly declared that requiring teacher knowledge to be justified according to conventional methods reinforces existing hegemonies. They went on to explain:

> When newly voiced modes of discourse, like certain versions of teacher research, push their way into existing conversations about ways of knowing … [t]hose located squarely inside the dominant epistemological and methodological paradigm use established [means] to evaluate and essentially dismiss alternate ones. (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999b, p. 23)

Meanwhile, Carter (1993, p. 11) warned of the dangers of replacing one hegemony with another "without challenging domination itself." Much like religious and moral philosopher, MacMurray (1961/1991, p. 216), she took the position that all knowledge justification is an inherently thorny issue; hence, all knowledge claims—including those of a teacher knowledge nature—need to be troubled. And like Bruner (1986), who spoke of researchers as "reluctant epistemologists" (p. 155), she cited epistemic concerns as an overarching challenge, not one solely plaguing defenders of the dominant paradigm. Then, Clandinin and Connelly (1996), using richly textured empirical examples, compellingly illustrated that the wrong questions have been asked and argued that it is self evident that teachers know that they know, but that the knowledge which teachers hold and express always will be dependent on the contexts in which they work, the situations they encounter, and the politics of what constitutes knowledge. In short, no universal rules could ever apply due to the shifting nature of knowledge and how it is situated in context, a point with which Putnam and Borko (2000) more recently have agreed. And Doyle (1990) earlier queried if knowledge could ever be generated in such a way that is "lifted up from but not stripped of its particulars?" His question reiterated Schwab's concerns about "rhetorics of conclusions" and implied that the largely taken-for-granted idea of "best practices" frequently embraced in the school reform literature requires careful reexamination.

Meanwhile, Lyons and LaBoskey assembled a group of colleagues to address the fact that story does not conform to conventionally accepted epistemological assumptions. Adopting Bruner's groundbreaking view that story and argument represent two different modes of knowing (Bruner, 1986) and drawing on the contributions of Kuhn (1962/1970) in the philosophy of science and Mishler (1990) in social psychology, they proposed the use of narrative exemplars as a way to show that teachers know and that they know that they know. These candidate exemplars (Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002)—these sets of narrative teaching and research practices that a community makes visible—would demonstrate that teachers are knowledge creators and users and help to elevate teaching as a form of scholarship (Boyer, 1990) producing verifiable knowledge (Schön, 1995) and contribute to knowledge growth in the field (Shulman, 1986, 1998).

Following Mishler, Lyons, and LaBoskey's candidate exemplar idea calls for the reformulation of validity as validation—that is; validation as the degree to which studies are trustworthy, worthy of being acted on (Mishler, 1990). Lyons and LaBoskey and their colleagues persuasively illustrate that inquiry-guided research "depends on concrete examples ... fully elaborated so that members of a relevant research community can judge for themselves their 'trustworthiness' and the validity of observations, interpretations, etc." Here, readers can see the expansion of the epistemic net from a narrow focus on "How do we know truth?" to the fuller consideration of "How do we endow experience with meaning?" (Bruner, 1986, 1990). This turn from validity as conventionally conceived is a necessary one because knowledge justification in the first instance is context free and universal, and context sensitive and particular in the second one. At the same time, a criteria of appropriate rigor has been applied so that the "merit" of teachers' knowledge is not "corrupted or demeaned" through the implication that it is "not subject to justification or cannot or should not be justified" (Fenstermacher, 1994).

As such, each of the four narrative inquiries contained in this volume could stand alone as a candidate exemplar that illuminates research on a particular dimension of practice: the intersection where teachers'/principals' knowledge meets stories of reform on the professional knowledge landscapes of schools. Each expands on what is known about the nature of teachers' (and principals') knowledge and how it is held and expressed. Each reflects the knowing of a particular amalgam of knowers. Each captures, in a three-dimensional way, the temporal, personal and social, and contextual influences on teachers' knowledge development. And each brings with it a set of strengths and cautions.

The strengths include such things as careful field-based research undertaken over a sustained period of time with teachers positioned as knowers not abstractions, inquiry arising out of an ongoing research program, fine-grained accounting of the complications and complexities of school reform, the inclusion of voices that cross racial, cultural, national, gender, age, and years of experience lines, an emphasis on showing rather than telling, and the reconstruction of personal, communal, and contextual meaning. Then, too, there is palpable change occurring in the restorying process and the emergent way that "the political" arises out of educators' real world situations, an important distinction from research accounts where ideology runs wild—with a preponderance of blaming and no hope of action or change occurring in between (Ayon, 1994).

But then there also are drawbacks to this work, such things as the lack of generalizability of the "findings" (though the possibility of transferability exists) and the fact that individuals change in their situations and through the research process but these changes largely take place against a backdrop of other individuals, institutions, and organizations not appearing to move at the same pace or in the same direction. A further challenge has to do with the illuminative nature of the inquiry. While this genre of research unearths metaphors that were lived by and richly plumbs their meanings, it does not offer prescriptions concerning best reform practices nor does it leave readers with the asinine suggestion that particular metaphors of school reform ought to be adopted/mandated. Rather, in a manner unsettling to some, narrative inquiry as a research method throws what has been revealed back on knowledgeable and knowing readers and views them as enormously capable of making sound judgments based on how their interpretations of the complex accounts that have been rendered stand in relationship to their personal experiences, knowledge, and sensibilities.

At the same time, the four exemplars—along with their acknowledged strengths and limitations—comprise a great deal more than an alternate way to validate teacher knowledge. They form strong storied models from which readers can "speculate what needs to be changed and with what effect." They apprise the field and the academy of mind-numbing chills and well-documented gaps that routinely and quite unnecessarily narrow lives lived on school landscapes, despite intentions to the contrary. And they bring to light with piercing clarity a host of burning issues that demand readers' urgent attention and mindful action. And they do so through the use of storied metaphors—the topic to which I direct undivided attention in Chapter 13.

NOTES

1. Aberrant events that bring about unexpected changes also shape school landscapes. The New York tragedy that occurred on September 11, 2001 exemplifies this point.
2. I include myself in the "everyone else."
3. Huber and Whelan (1995) first explored teacher–student knowledge communities in Clandinin and Connelly's *Teachers' Professional Knowledge Landscapes* book.
4. When I serve as an evaluator, I constantly am reminded that my authority is not self-evident, although I might delude myself into thinking so. It, too, is given—and therefore can be taken away—by those lodged in the conduit.
5. Etienne Wenger (1998) does a striking job of unpacking the training metaphor in *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*.

CHAPTER 13

GRAND FINALE II

Midway between the unintelligible and the commonplace, it is metaphor which most produces knowledge.[1]

—Aristotle

We have reached the point in this volume where the one remaining thing to do is to comprehensively examine the storied metaphors. A combined investigation needs to be undertaken as to what they cumulatively reveal about educators' knowledge and how it is shaped by organized school reform lived in context and over the continuum. The question of how the particular storied metaphors better position us to understand the relationships between teacher knowledge, school context, and organized school reform rises to the fore. The matter of what contributions the metaphors cumulatively make bubbles to the surface. The idea of the value they offer to the educational enterprise inevitably is called into question.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE METAPHORS

When the Yaeger inquiry began in 1997, I struggled to make sense of the field texts gathered over several months. Among other perplexing matters, monkey terms and several direct references to *The Monkey's Paw* were sprinkled throughout them. Readers will recall that it was not until Daryl Wilson outright told me that I would not understand the happenings on his school landscape and in teachers' storied lives until I read *The Monkey's Paw* that the import of the particular metaphor and its significant relationship to teacher

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knowledge and how it becomes shaped and shared in context twigged with me. Not only did Wilson's comment and his loan of the book confirm my membership in one or more of his knowledge communities, it also illustrated the prominent role that metaphors played in his and others' reconstructions of their reform experiences—even though I was not aware at that time of the site-specific meaning embodied and embedded in the metaphorical footnotes I witnessed in faculty communications and in the words gathering on my pages. This was because my former encounters with images had involved the more common variety captured in the existing teacher knowledge literature, associations like "school as home" (Clandinin, 1986). *The Monkey's Paw,* however, was neither a commonly recognized nor frequently used expression in everyday life. It was novel, active, alive. And it was uniquely tailored to the Yaeger situation. It combined multiple experiences of school reform and bound them tightly together in a coherent fashion—with the practical and moral indeterminacy of the metaphor allowing for both setbacks and forward movement in the present and future living of the change efforts. By the time I had wrapped my mind around the pivotal importance of "the monkey's paw" metaphor to Yaeger's unfolding story and the educators' knowledge developments; it had advanced—through ongoing use—to the point at which it had become a narrative truth. That is, it had become accepted as satisfactorily representing human experience for the individual teachers and the knowledge community of teachers with whom I interacted (Spence, 1982). The number of times and the depths with which the metaphor had been probed had propelled it from being a hypothesis reflecting tacit knowing with deliberate acknowledgment, to a full blown, favored embodiment of meaning for not one but a whole series of back-to-back reform events. Furthermore, its meaning resonated with individuals and a whole group of people who were initiated and/or invited into its interpretive space which, in keeping with the personal practical view of knowledge, blended teachers' thoughts, feelings, and actions together.

In contrast to the Yaeger teachers' well established "monkey's paw" metaphor, Hardy's "dueling banjos" association was an emergent metaphor that arose from cumulative school reform experiences. In many ways, the development of Hardy's story constellation, which laid the experiential foundation for the explication of the metaphor, made highly visible the genesis of embodied, embedded metaphors and how they appear and become publicly shared on school landscapes. At Yaeger, the gritty details of how "the monkey's paw" was birthed appeared to be missing—not because I was not present on the school landscape, but because I had not yet figured out what was going on around me, and how to contextualize it. At Hardy, readers will recall, four teachers—two beginning and two veteran teachers—eased into the public use of the "dueling banjos" metaphor at a particular teacher research meeting of which I was a part. Following the teachers' implicit 'leads,' I further traced the metaphor's *Deliverance* connection and sketched the movie's plot line. The different strands of philosophical and political thought that shaped the movie's plot development surprisingly also could be seen as being present in the dueling theories of action that played out in cacophonic ways at Hardy. Readers will recall that the teachers named, in an unprompted fashion, how the stories of reform treated them in fundamentally different manners, which, in turn, created epistemological disturbances in their knowing. And the sense of instruments/students musically answering one another coupled with the idea of teacher researchers' listening, responding, and tuned to one another's stories set against a backdrop of institutional restraint further reinforced the banjo duel theme. The precarious resolution of the tune/screenplay of the movie additionally was consistent with the "inevitable" way the Hardy drama concluded.

The "dragon in school backyards" metaphor introduced by Henry Richards at Eagle High School also unfolded in a customized way. Whereas Yaeger's "monkey's paw" metaphor found its roots in classical literature and the origins of Hardy's "dueling banjos" could be connected to bluegrass music and the cinema, Eagle's "dragon in school backyards" metaphor combined folklore and mythology. In Henry's rendering, a mythological dragon—in the guise of the state accountability system—posed a perpetual threat to the quality of life on that school's professional knowledge landscape. According to Richards' metaphorical hypothesis, an attack from the dragon in the school's backyard could wreck havoc not only to the Eagle context but also on the educators' knowing, their identities, and their face-to-face work with students. The wide-scale awareness of the dragon's imposing threat became increasingly apparent when Henry revealed the metaphor in several interviews and conversations with me, employed it in faculty meetings and a vast array of casual and formal interactions on Eagle's professional knowledge landscape, and articulated it at meetings attended by representatives of all of the schools involved in the common story of reform, Yaeger, Hardy, and Destiny being some of them. Although I was amazed to discover Henry openly voicing and interrogating the dragon metaphor in these cross-campus audiences, the representatives from the other campuses appeared nonplussed by Henry's use of storied metaphor. To them, Richards' manner seemed neither strange nor peculiar. And the educators whose lives took shape on other school landscapes typically answered Henry's novel metaphor with new interpretations that they added to his tellings or conveyed tales of dragon sightings in their school backyards shaped by particular stories of school and school reform.

Where Destiny's "rainbow fish" was concerned, Lydia Thomas intentionally borrowed the metaphor from children's literature, deliberately narrated it, and brought it to life at a faculty meeting. As readers already know, the enlived "rainbow fish" metaphor simultaneously held and expressed

Lydia's developing knowledge of Destiny High School *and* constituted a narrative practice she employed in professional development situations with the Destiny facilitators. Although Thomas' approach was known to her, it was implicitly experienced, but not overtly named, by the teachers with whom she worked. Nevertheless, its powerful influence was evident in the facilitators' knowing, particularly by those who linked her administrative approach—her narrative practice in action—with sheer wisdom. Furthermore, language connected to Lydia's narrative practice—that is, her metaphorical association of Destiny High School/The Community Outreach Center with *The Rainbow Fish*—had an expanding effect on the school's landscape, in the school district, and eventually on the reform movement. Associated words, phrases, and practices surfaced as its influence became increasingly apparent in predictable and unpredictable ways.

THE PLOT LINES OF THE METAPHORS

Because the origins of all four metaphors were connected to classical and children's literature, folklore and mythology, music and the cinema, there was no mistake about them: each, in its own way, was linked to a specific plot line. Whereas *The Monkey's Paw* and *The Rainbow Fish* story lines were easily accessible in "original"[2] print form (and generously brought to my attention by the educators), I had to dig deeper to excavate the plot lines of the "dueling banjos" and "the dragon in school backyards" metaphors.

The musical selection, *Dueling Banjos*, by virtue of its title, intimated building tensions between binary themes whereas its *Feuding Banjos* subtitle signaled even more fractious forces at work: entities on a collision course with one another. Moreover, the teachers' distinct association of the *Dueling Banjos* tune with the *Deliverance* movie indicated that the script was another reference which could inform the meaning the teachers implied. This connection not only seamed together the bluegrass tune and the story line of the movie, it provided ways for me to consider how the teachers' knowledge of how school reform events unraveled at Hardy, as evidenced in my field texts, might be similar to and different from *Dueling Banjos* and *Deliverance* working in tandem with one another. This lent a particular interpretive twist to the field texts I had gathered.

Without a doubt, the most perplexing metaphor to decipher was Henry Richards' "dragon in school backyards" plot line. It prompted thought in two very different directions: the history of mythology, available in fiction and nonfiction books and on the worldwide web; and folklore, where the oral tradition prevails. Whereas one part of the investigation caused me to pour over books in the library and to visit websites on my computer screen, the other required that I pay increasing attention to the orations that distinguished Henry's telling of the tale. Unlike the other metaphors whose plot lines were heavily embellished, Henry's metaphor was hazy, elusive, not easy to grasp—perfectly suited to the mythological creature on which it centered. Its common thread was not a fully developed story. Instead, it was a conglomeration of narratives that boiled down to a single essence: humankind has risked/feared showdowns with dragons since the beginning of time—a bare bones plot line that fit with the educators' experiences lived and told on the Eagle landscape. At the same time, I relied heavily on Henry Richards and the Eagle teachers to flesh out their dragon creations and the events leading up to the "draconian showdown" as one teacher termed it. Readers can well appreciate that the dragon encounter was entirely hypothetical for almost the whole time I worked with Henry, although he constantly made the possibility known to others and me. Only after Richards left the school and I painstakingly continued to unpeel the events in the company of others on Eagle's school landscape and in conversation with Henry in his new campus context did the reality of the dragon attack—the fulfillment of the nebulous plot line—hit home with a decided "I warned you this could happen" kind of thud.

Cumulatively, the plot lines of the four metaphors make explicit two critical points about the nature of teachers' (and by association, principals') knowledge of school reform: how teachers/principals make sense of phenomenon not previously known to them and how they communicate that knowing to others.

When the educators metaphorically spoke of monkey's paws, dueling banjos, backyard dragons, and the rainbow fish in their exchanges with one another and me, they did not do so to be evasive, to appear creative, or to show off. They did so because they were human beings making sense of a *disembodied* idea—organized school reform—through reflectively analyzing their *embodied* relationships to how it became lived. They genuinely wanted to understand the influence of its entailments on their identities and the stories they and their students could live and tell within the contexts of their particular school landscapes. Having not previously entered into particular experiences, such as organized reform experiences (as was the case with most of the teachers and the principals), the educators naturally sought out embodied, embedded metaphors to imbue meaning on the *unknown* through connecting it—in situationally relevant and revealing ways—with the *known.* Stated differently, the educators could not make meaning out of nothing; they had to work from something they already knew—that is; what was available to them in their repertoires of experience. That was precisely what Yaeger's reading teachers did when they connected a classical literature selection they taught to 8th grade students with their experiences of organized reform. Hardy's teachers similarly bridged their understanding of that school's reform situation through referencing a tune practiced and performed by their students and a street in the Hardy community on which they drove daily. Henry Richards at Eagle followed suit by turning to folklore and mythology to make sense of the unknown consequences that mandated accountability system testing could have on the curriculum focus the faculty desired for its diverse student population. Lydia Thomas likewise drew on the plot line of a children's literature book to inform her sense-making of what was going on on the Destiny and Community Outreach Center landscape and in the educators' and the school's relationships with the world (bounded by the school district conduit and the reform movement conduits). In all four cases, clear-cut associations were made between teachers' instruction of students in in-classroom places and the stories of students' and educators' lives that could be lived within the margins outlined by the various combinations of conduits in out-of-school places. The point that needs to be stressed over and over again here is this one: the knowing and knowledgeable educators at Yaeger, Hardy, Eagle, and Destiny personally and socially constructed meaning in a metaphoric manner—not because they were deficit or naïve in their knowledge development—but because they had no other alternatives available to them as human beings. In review: the pernicious problem was not the teachers' knowledge per se, but others' almost total disregard as to how that knowledge is held and expressed in context which, in turn, bore serious implications for the teachers' lives, their profession, and their identities.

Schön broadly addressed the role of metaphors in human knowledge construction when he made sense of the work of scientists in the following manner:

> ... [they used] metaphors as devices for explaining theory when [the metaphors] were actually essential to the formation of the theory. In discussing a theory of genes, the lecturer may say: "Think of it, if you will, as a kind of code," when in fact he has no other way of thinking of it. (Schön. 1963, p. 105)

While those conducting inquiries in the hard sciences are able to shed, even deny, the metaphorical constructions they used to arrive at conventionally defensible knowledge, those studying or working in relationship with human beings in the social sciences, humanities, and arts—teachers and researchers alike—are unable to so. The blunt fact of the matter is embodied, embedded understandings are all that human beings have to go on. Stated more appropriately, narrative and, by association, metaphors, offer us an inexhaustible supply—with limitless reach—of everything we could possibly need to make sense of our lives lived in relationship and in context and to distinguish and celebrate our humanity. We have no other way of making sense of school reform—or any other humanly experienced phenomenon, for that matter—without succumbing to the complete disregard or flattening of experience itself. It follows, then, that it is absolutely essential that alternatives to diminishing and dismissing non-privileged ways of knowing and/or unsuccessfully squeezing all knowing into a dominant epistemic form be found and critical that we cultivate other approaches—rigorous in their own right—as Lyons and LaBoskey and their colleagues have done through their presentation, defense, and invitation to critique the candidate exemplar idea they advanced.

The second point I wish to emphasize here has to do with why the educators particularly conveyed their knowledge through metaphors arising from classical and children's literature, music and the cinema, and mythology and folklore, a matter that has thoroughly intrigued me since 1997. I have mulled and mused over: Why *The Monkey's Paw*? Why *Dueling Banjos*? Why *The Dragon in School Backyards*? Why *The Rainbow Fish*? At first, I wondered: Did the educators take recourse to literary works and the arts because they personally tended to have humanities, social science, and arts backgrounds? But the answer to that query was a definite "no." I communicated with mathematics and science teachers nearly as much as teachers who instructed in other subject areas. The teacher in the Yaeger study who declared that he "hated curriculum writing," for example, taught science; so did Missy and others in the Hardy piece; and science and mathematics teachers played prominent roles in the Eagle and Destiny inquiries, although I did not consider it significant at that time to label their contributions as such. Then other puzzling questions crossed my mind: Could my social science and music background have exerted an influence? Was it perhaps because some consider my research arts-based? (Diamond, 2000). Or, maybe it was because all educators, even those who teach mathematics and science, are teachers first—hence primarily involved in the human sciences? These considerations, though provocative, also did not seem to strike at the heart of the matter. Then, I chanced to read Solzhenitsyn's Nobel Prize acceptance speech[3] and one line jumped off the page at me: "The sole substitute for an experience which we have not ourselves lived through is art and literature." Solzhenitsyn's words enlightened me as to why the educators happened upon the storied metaphors featured in this work: the educators called forth metaphors with performing arts and literary roots because the particular metaphors were the closest their provisional knowing could come to the raw experiences they and others previously had not encountered. Furthermore, the specific metaphors offered a way to bundle their knowledge in an aesthetic form that could be communicated and understood well by others.

THE MORALS OF THE METAPHORS

Not only were the educators' metaphors explicitly connected to known plot lines, each carried strong moral messages as narrative phenomena are inclined to do (Gudmundsdottir, 1991). Building tensions within the developing metaphors clearly signaled progression toward or away from the fulfillment of duly foreshadowed themes in each storied case. In fact, the tensions implicit in the live metaphors made the educators' knowledge developments richly apparent. This was the case not only for the teachers and principals saturated and supersaturated in their reform experiences, but also for me as I attempted to convey my raw research experiences of their raw reform experiences. In short, the unsettling moral tensions implicit in the metaphors deepened both their and my interpretive analyses.

Before I center on the specific morals, it is vital that they be considered against the backdrop of a dominant, inherited metaphor that reflects the privileged knowledge that the educators clearly challenged in ever so creative ways. Interestingly, a single novel metaphor did not instantaneously come to mind, but a thumbnail sketch of a submerged, inactive metaphor most certainly did. The fossilized metaphor can be summed up in three simple words or two words and a symbol: "reform is progress" or "reform = progress" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999), Nested in three largely undisputed sacred stories—the ascendancy of science over art, the belief that evolutionary change (indirect change *and* directed change) results in progress and the claim that an external reality exists from which objective knowledge can be extrapolated (Crossan, 1998, p. 6), the taken-for-granted "reform is progress" metaphor perpetuates the belief that directed change can speed up or intensify movement toward desired ends in the field of education as technically rationally conceived. And the metaphor furthermore projects an encompassing moral message: that reform (planned change) is good—good for individuals, good for institutions, good for economic growth, good for the nation, good for international relations. As portrayed—firmly established in American society and deeply ingrained in the American psyche—who of sound cognitive function would disagree with reform? (Lakoff, 1997).

As readers witnessed time and again in this book, those with whom I conducted the inquiries—who lived school reform in up-close and personal ways with students in classroom and school contexts—most certainly experienced more than dissenting moments in their interactions with the sacred story of school reform. But their concerns were not with reform in principle (for they unanimously agreed that evolutionary change is inevitable and that positive change is desirable) but with its known excesses—incongruencies between methods and desired outcomes, imbalances in power relations, over-reliance on standardization, lack of fit between changing educators, shifting school contexts, and seemingly static institutional backdrops, and the almost complete lack of attention to the epistemological dimensions of teacher knowledge *and* school reform.

So, what epiphanies did the metaphors to which the educators naturally were attracted offer? How did their self-selected metaphors temper the uncritical pursuit of the "reform is progress"/"reform is good" rhetoric which the history of school reform interpreted by both liberal (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) and conservative (Ravitch & Vinovskis, 1995) historians finds questionable, even abysmal—but for different reasons? (Farrell, 2000). Let us return once more to the four narrative inquiries to cull the knowledge that those who lived school reform at the most intimate of levels offered through their rich experiences bound up in the storied metaphors.

The moral of "the monkey's paw" metaphor as lived at Yaeger was clearly associated with the teachers' discovery that embracing stories of reform inescapably involves tempting fate and sometimes getting more than what one bargains for. That is to say, for every promised upside associated with organized reform experiences, a very real possibility of downside exists, even the potential of utterly devastating results. Then, too, there was the related message that teachers need to be discerning in order to shape stories of reform so that what is useful becomes a part of practice and what is found to be without value is sloughed off. Otherwise, teachers run the additional risk of themselves—as well as a bevy of others—sealing their fates.

Meanwhile, the "dueling banjos" metaphor at Hardy warned that the introduction of more than one story of reform to any school landscape unavoidably creates tensions that can build to open conflict. Furthermore, although resolution—a sense of an ending (Kermode, 2000)—between competing factions may be imminent, the nature of the resolution may abate further decline, but not leave schools, students, and/or educators in a better position than when they started. Again, the underlying message was that the teachers need to be wary—open to opportunities that may benefit students and schools—but keenly focused on how things fit together in the overarching social context and the ever-present possibility that their students and they may be used to serve others' wills. Again, long-term burdens disguised as short-term gifts need to be watched out for.

Where Eagle's "dragon in school backyards" metaphor was concerned, the sense of what occurs on school landscapes being very clearly connected to what goes on outside of them was sharply brought into view. Even when school landscapes like Eagle appear secure and forward moving, external forces—things like standardized test scores associated with the state accountability system and the declining socioeconomic status of families residing in the attendance zone—must be kept in mind. They can fuse in ways that can threaten, even obliterate, efforts to promote students' learning built up over a series of years. Furthermore, educators' identities, job satisfaction and sense of secure employment paradoxically can be jeopardized despite their best attempts to enhance the life possibilities of the students in their care.

And at Destiny, the "rainbow fish" message had to with the relationship between privilege and happiness—that being gifted with rich opportunities not available to others—can set one apart in ways beyond what typically is imagined. Yet, only through communication and participation can the knowledge and lessons learned become distributed and made known to others in potentially generative ways. Otherwise, sadness about achieving much but being in a position to share little sets in. The question of viability and longevity also looms large.

Rolling together these brief sketches of the moral messages gleaned from the storied metaphors, we find ourselves immersed in a more realistic view of the complex act of organized school reform, one deeply etched in the toil of human living. Here, we encounter views of school reform authentically renovated and revised by and through real life experiences. Here, we witness school-based educators returning to stories of reform with a language to instantiate their experiences—not only for themselves but also for others who can learn from the stories of their lives that can serve as models. Here, we appreciate how the storied metaphors made the excavation, establishment, and embellishment of meaning possible. Here, inordinately perceptive knowledge of change and what it entails—when teachers are stirred to thought and spurred to action—takes front and center stage.

THE FREEDOM OF THE METAPHORS

In the inquiries, the educators freely voiced the novel metaphors at illuminative junctures in their schools' narrative histories when simplistic, prevailing beliefs about school reform no longer worked. Bluntly stated, the subterranean, pervasive metaphor that "reform is progress/reform is good" had broken down for them—it no longer was worthy of their trust. Hence, their knowledge arising from their personal interactions with the reform phenomenon in context and over time caused them to experiment in this transitional phase with more lifelike renderings in line with the vicissitudes of their human experiences rather than embracing the "absolutized" metaphor which was "meaningless, if not destructive" (McFague, 1982, p. 31) due to its untroubled, universally applied optimism. In doing so, the educators as individuals, as members of knowledge communities, and as colleagues within and across school sites exercised their narrative authority in ways that took into account the discordant (aberrant from the pervasive view) experiences they had encountered. The educators' metaphors not only lent vividness to abstraction, they also heightened their thinking, indeed, their knowledge developments concerning what had been going on and what was likely to continue to go on as a consequence of them acting *and* not acting in certain ways. The particular storied metaphors were not only discoveries the educators came to by virtue of their lived situations but also knowledge creations produced by them in the throes of experiences (Kermode, 1979). Furthermore, the metaphors aptly demonstrated that despite teachers being denied knowledgeability in the living of certain stories of reform, their narrative authority—evident in their storied metaphorical utterances—continued to flourish and lead to metamorphases, albeit in manners detrimental to specific stories of reform. Even within the most professionally stifling circumstances, the educators' personal practical knowledge expanded in individually and socially funded ways. For example, the teacher who was both terrified and vitalized by her stunning realization of the emergence of a new framework at Eagle, shared the following insight in an especially lucid manner *after* the accountability dragon attack:

> I am not sure how to describe it because it was really an epiphany for me about my teaching craft. And what I saw was that I could be a good teacher in the midst of the forced agenda . . . that good things came out of it if I was willing to be reflective. And what I came to learn as a teacher [was this]: there are many forces we can't control, I would say most things we cannot control, but in the midst of that I can do very well in my classroom. But, the reflection, I think, is crucial. I would say for me as a teacher it is the number one thing . . . if you are not reflecting or taking a hard look . . . , you can't make changes . . . SO how can you make changes if you don't even know what you are doing? (Coppola, 1999–2000)

This teacher's strong sense of narrative authority let loose in the face of adversity convincingly demonstrates that, despite the full battery of tactics available, "success will never come in the unidirectional form of implanting . . ." Her words make abundantly clear that those stationed in the conduit may indeed "enforce parameters—discipline, punish, test" (Blacker, 1997, p. 49). Yet, the meanings this teacher and the other educators quoted in this book will take away from their experiences—either reflectively *or* nonreflectively—will inescapably be their own (Olson & Craig, 2001). This boiled-to-the-essence understanding of teachers' knowledge—indeed human knowledge—represents the most important, yet least valued and understood, entailment in the living of stories of organized school reform—indeed, life on the professional knowledge landscape of schools as a whole. Regardless of how big we begin, how grandiose and complicated our stories of reform may be, how many sponsors we identify, how much financial support we garner, and how high-minded and pure-hearted our purposes may be, we inevitably return to the individual teacher as a knowledgeable and knowing *potential* change agent of one.

THE TEACHER KNOWLEDGE IMPLICATIONS OF THE METAPHORS

As can be seen, the significance of novel metaphors to the educators' narrative ways of knowing school reform is firmly established in this book. Also, inordinately apparent is the highly significant role these live metaphors played in bringing disjointed experiential reform experiences together in the educators' thoughts, communication, and action. Clearly, teachers and principals actively invented metaphoric associations to frame and reframe their experiences of organized school reform and to more fully inform future interpretations. Not only did these metaphors authentically capture immensely complex epistemological dilemmas in the teachers' knowing, they also helped the teachers to address and live through the tension-filled dilemmas they encountered on the professional knowledge landscapes of their schools. These metaphors additionally aided the educators to further burrow into their sense making and to broaden their communications within and across their communities of knowing and within and across school landscapes. In short, the novel metaphors transmediated disparate experiences, threaded them together, and made them into believable wholes at the same time as they served to catalyze ongoing knowledge construction and reconstruction.

The centrality of novel metaphors and the essential role they played at the lived intersection where teacher knowledge encounters school reform on teachers' professional knowledge landscapes constitutes the contribution of this work to both the teacher knowledge and school reform literatures. Yet, the revelation undeniably reflects important shifts that have taken place in other fields of study. Readers will remember that I purposely began this book with quotations from anthropologists, Mary Catherine Bateson and Clifford Geertz, and, following Clandinin and Connelly's lead, used the work of philosophers, linguists, historians, theologians, and psychologists as well as a broad range of educational theorists to lay the theoretical groundwork for the four narrative inquiries. Like educators, scholars in these other disciplines increasingly have turned away from the positivist paradigm where knowledge as attribute is afforded privileged status. Like educators, they inevitably have found narrative to be the most likely medium to capture the contingencies of human experience as lived in context and over time. And like educators, they frequently have explored metaphor as an elemental way of making sense of the *experience of experiences*, a fundamentally important idea to both teacher knowledge studies *and* school reform inquiries. Along the way, the positivist myth of metaphor as literal truth has been chipped away and ideas about embodied metaphors and metaphorical hypotheses have gained currency—building support for narrative versions of truth and reinforcing the need for a different approach to knowledge validation. And Bruner in his most recent publication stressed "the haunting power of metaphor, giving story its loft beyond the particular." This loft, he wisely explained, binds the discontinuities and uncertainties of life together to keep narrative and paradigmatic landscapes "intertwined, making the knower and known inseparable." And Bruner concluded: "It is when we lose sight of the two in league that our lives narrow" (Bruner, 2002, pp. 26–27).

PARTING THOUGHTS

In this book, I have interpreted and reinterpreted, in multilayered ways, four narrative inquiries of school reform. I have done so to portray storied lives, storied landscapes, and storied metaphors but not to valorize teachers, principals, or schools, to lambaste particular reform initiatives, philanthropies, or school districts (or insult their representatives), or to study the experiences of people just like me. On the other hand, my purpose has been to show and tell what actually is happening with respect to school reform—from educators' perspectives at the ground level, not what ought to be happening—from the point of view of others in out-of-school places. My aim has been to reveal the complex dynamics of how educators' experiences unfurl in context. My intent has been to advance what is known about the relationship between teachers' knowledge and the living of stories of organized reform on school landscapes. My desire has been to understand what has been going on—with an eye fixed to what likely is to continue to go on if changes of a productive sort are not made with more informed understandings of teachers' knowledge and its interface with organized stories of reform—set within conventional institutional backdrops—held closely in mind.

I could end this book by suggesting that this work breaks theoretical ground based on empirical research conducted longitudinally in four flesh-and-blood school contexts located in close proximity to one another. I could end by emphasizing what the narratives cumulatively reveal about the underside of educators' reform experiences and the politics of what constitutes knowledge. I could end by underscoring the importance of storied metaphors to understanding teachers' knowledge, school contexts, and school reform. I could end by reinforcing teacher knowledge and school reform as epistemological matters to which other disciplines have much to offer. I could end by focusing on narrative inquiry and what it allowed me to do, see, and be on the four school landscapes. However, I will do none of the above.

Instead, I wish to return to the beginning and focus blinding attention on the near legion of teachers, principals, and community members whose experiences and interpretations were crucial to the four person-centered, school-based inquiries—the few who participated as main characters and the many who contributed as supporting actors in the school reform events I portrayed. With a deep sense of appreciation, I again thank them for their faithful commitments to their practices, their undeniable love of youth, the rich life of their minds, and the generous caring of their actions. With great hope, I present their mingled reform experiences to the practice, research, philanthropic, and policy communities so that they may serve as models to spark productive conversations and to spur powerful actions with the betterment of school landscapes and the sacred trust of the teaching profession and children's futures held firmly in view.

NOTES

1. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III, 141b.
2. I use the word, 'original,' in a guarded fashion. *The Monkey's Paw*, for example, clearly arose from the oral tradition (Fletcher, 1996).
3. Alexander Solzhenitsyn was the 1970 Nobel Laureate in Literature.

EPILOGUE

CHAPTER 14

A CASE OF "NIGHT AND THE CANDLEMAKER"

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.[1]

Over a year has passed since the "dueling banjos" metaphor emerged on Hardy Academy's professional knowledge landscape. The circumstances in which that metaphor provided critical insights are now part of Hardy's social narrative history but the knowledge the teachers and I gleaned from its unique fusion with their experiences will be carried forward to new situations. My collaborative inquiry with the teacher research group continues. Today, Harriet (original magnet school teacher, coordinator of the major reform movement grant), Anna (original magnet school teacher, member of the school reform team), Kaye (the teacher who attend the school reform meeting "to see what was going on"), and Pete (original magnet school teacher, member of the school reform team) are gathered. Each of us pursues a question that ignites our interests within the knowledge using and knowledge generating community we have created.

Harriet, reflecting her art background and her discovery of pre-desegregation year photographs while moving old furniture at Hardy, is on a visual historical journey. Her intent is to locate the faces in the faded prints she has found; she wants to return to the individuals a piece of their disrupted pasts. As part of her search, she has interviewed some of Hardy's original teachers and has advocated that one of their names be bestowed on a school that is under construction. Anna, immensely concerned about the school's high teacher/assistant principal/principal turnover rate, is exam-

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ining her autobiography and the biography of her colleagues to figure out what has sustained her and them and helped her and them to become long-term teachers at Hardy. She intentionally wants to use what she uncovers to walk alongside the revolving door of educators who come to Hardy—but do not stay long. Another veteran teacher, Pete, explores the writing of middle school boys through the microscopic lens of individuals with whom he has been successful and less than successful. Today, he brings his lesson plans, his journal, and his students' journals as he places his teacher work alongside his students' work in an attempt to connect his practices with their developing sense of voice and personal agency. Kaye is there, too. She, like Pete, is seeking advanced reading and writing endorsements in a major national writing project. Kaye's focus is on high quality young adult literature that resonates with the lives of the particular adolescents she teaches. Her attention is tuned to her students' interests and what selections invite and actively engage them as readers and writers. And me? I have returned to my "dilemmas that gnaw at my soul" chapter (Craig, 1995c) and am extending my horizons to include the research dilemmas I have experienced as I have moved between and among and on and off multiple school landscapes over the continuum.

As the teachers and I offer important feedback to one another, we agree: the topics each of us explores—in one way or another—relates to resilience: the resilience of the African American community, the resilience of teachers, the resilience of students nurtured by high quality reading and writing experiences, and the resilience of researchers engaged in long term teacher knowledge inquiries involving the highly contested topic of school reform.

Then Kaye observes: "We—[members of our teacher research group, our knowledge community]—are a bunch of "night and the candlemakers." We turn to her totally surprised: the metaphor is not in our repertoires. Then Kay reaches into her satchel—filled-to-the-brim with young adult's writing assignments—and removes a storybook. *Night and the Candlemaker* (Somary & Bartram, 2000) is what it is titled. She tells us the plot line totally "hooked" her students. She informs us that she has many quality writing assignments which attest to the story's power. She wants us to know that the metaphor has provided her with keen insights into what fuels her successful work with large numbers of adolescents who have been labeled "at risk."

The rest of us sit silently. Downcast. Experientially deprived. Then Kaye offers to read the children's literature book to us in a style that is uniquely Kaye. We listen in a way that only members of a teacher research knowledge community could. And we come to know in a manner that is distinctively human.

We are a spellbound audience. Totally enraptured. And the whole idea of resiliency, a common thread that meanders through our joint investigations, throws me back on the five years I have conducted the multiple narrative inquiries of school reform. I am fully conscious to the interpretive doors Kaye's novel metaphor opens up[2]. . . .

> *Everyone in the world is asleep. Everyone, that is, except the candlemaker.*
> *A single flame flickers on his windowsill as he dips long, thin reeds*
> *into a vat of warm beeswax, making candles in the darkness.*[3]

And I ask myself,

With the thought of the longitudinal research study

Held closely in mind…

Why?

Why have I been so deeply committed to contextualizing teachers' knowledge?

Why have I been so relentlessly keen to conduct research in schools and with teachers?

Why have I been so insatiably curious about the influence of school reform on teachers, teachers' knowledge communities, and school contexts?

Why have I bothered to carry on when others clearly have taken "flights from the field?" (Schwab, 1969).

> *Night, dark and terrible, comes creeping through the town*
> *and slides under the door of the workshop,*
> *whispering fearful threats.*

And I think to myself,

What if?

What if inevitable school reform tensions become blamed on me?

What if neither my lived efforts nor my written contributions make a hair of difference?

What if my person-centered, school-based research studies conducted over an extensive period of time yield no publishable texts?

What if I uttered "truths" that broke the world?

How can the candlemaker be sure his work is not in vain?

And then I relax
And breathe
And realize…
I am like the teachers and principals whose lived experiences I study.
I, like them, help to light candles everyday.
I, like them, help to stoke fires of learning.
I, like them, help to illuminate lives lived on school landscapes.
I, like them—and the candlemaker—"make tomorrow."

* * * * * *

Better to light one candle
Then to curse the darkness.[4]

NOTES

1. This expression is widely attributed to William Butler Yeats.
2. Although I wrote this mixed genre poem in response to what took place in the Hardy teacher research group, I learned how to write this kind of poetry and openly patterned my poem on one collaboratively written by several Yaeger teachers in a study group setting focused on adolescents who are reluctant readers. The content of the poem reflects questions I have pondered in my research studies with Eagle and Destiny teachers and educators from other campuses, particularly those at Cochrane Academy and Heights Community Learning Center.
3. From *Night and the Candlemaker.*
4. This quotation is attributed to St. Francis of Assisi and ancient Chinese proverbs.

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